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# THE HOUSE OF THE GOOD NEIGHBOR

BY  
ESTHER POHL LOVEJOY

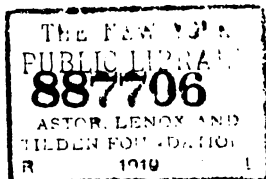
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1. *Py. 1901* — *Hospital, Chicago, 1901*  
2. " " — *Influenza, 1901*  
3. " " — *Par. 1. 1901*

Lovejoy

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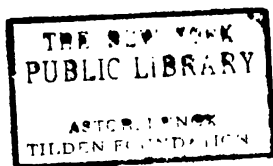
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**"THE HOOVERMITE"**

This little Miss Muffit has an American dress and is testing American sugar

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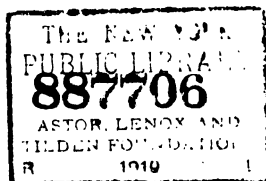
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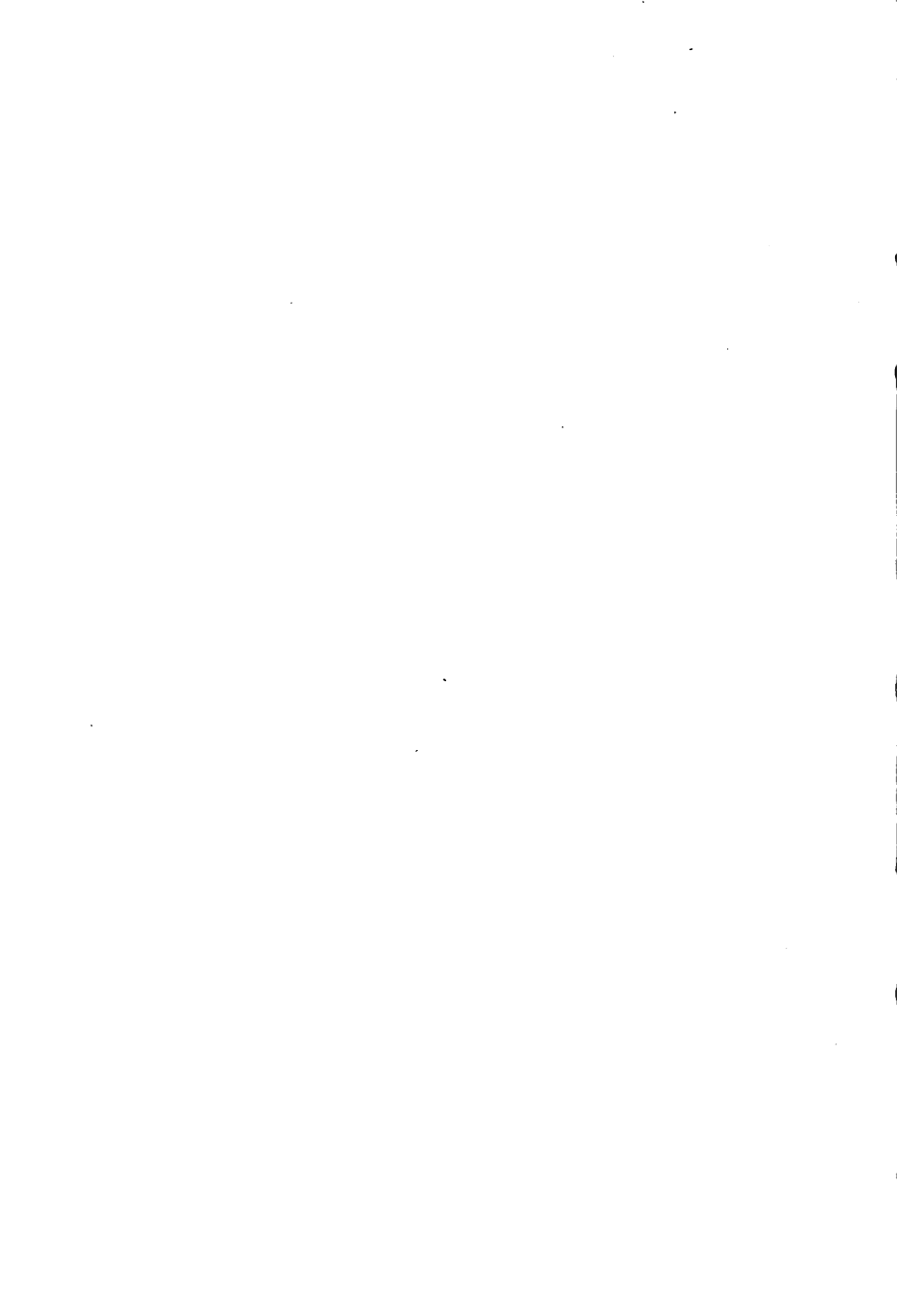
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# THE HOUSE OF THE GOOD NEIGHBOR

## CHAPTER I

### ONE OF THE MANSIONS

TEMPERATURE is a determining factor in all forms of life. Knowing the peculiarities of a species the temperature can usually be depended upon to lead us straight to his habitat. This simple law made it easy to locate the American population in Paris during the winter months through the four long years of war. Those who knew the way to France, and had gotten there without government assistance, were accustomed to summer heat the year round, and could usually be found in the hotels where there was plenty of hot water and the radiators had not been affected by the war.

The hotel where I lived in the beginning catered to my country-folk. The radiators radiated regularly, and this was strong evidence that a large quantity of coal was being consumed to add to the comfort of the transient population. There was hot water in the pipes every day of the week and on Sundays, to be used by the guests in any quantity by merely turning on the faucet, and if the food commissioner had come to that hotel seeking evidence of national famine it certainly would not have been found. The rates were



very high. They were more than I could afford. But who can afford to be cold and hungry when heat is for sale, and all kinds of food except grape-fruit, griddle-cakes and corn on the cob are to be had for mere money?

It was hard to leave that warm hotel and face the cold French world. The habits of a comfortable life bound me to that hostelry. But Mademoiselle Marie-Jeanne Bassot had offered to take me to a French social center, a neighborhood house in Levallois, and by making a virtue of this opportunity it was easier to give up my nice warm billet and move to that chilly factory district on the outskirts of Paris.

The home of Mademoiselle Bassot and her associates had two names. It was known officially as the *Residence Sociale*, but the people of the locality had given it a better name. Because of what it had meant to them for so many years, they had unofficially christened it, "The House of the Good Neighbor."

This *house* was the most wonderful house in the world to me. It was not large or pretentious in appearance, but it had taken fifteen years to build it. The structure was not merely a building of brick and stone, three stories high and covering a definite number of square feet of the earth's surface, but a pervasive influence that modified and ennobled the characters of the people it voluntarily served. No material limits of extension could be placed on the House of the Good Neighbor. It was more than a house. Our Father's House has many mansions, and this was one of the mansions of our Father's House. It was a spiritual essence that reached as far as any

susceptible child that ever came within its radius might wander, and then reached out through him to worlds unknown.

The House of the Good Neighbor was founded on faith in humanity, and its soul was sympathy. It was sustained by the good will of the community, and strengthened by tender childhood memories in the minds and hearts of strong young men and women who no longer needed help, and who were returning with usury the loving kindness they had received during their years of need, and unconsciously requiting their obligation by giving in many directions and in multiplied measure of the strength and helpfulness developed in them by their early connection with the House of the Good Neighbor.

Compared with the hotel where I had been staying the *house* was cold and dark in one way, but warm and light in another. There was no heat or light to be turned on or off at will, but the place radiated the social spirit in a warm and cordial way that outshone anything I had ever experienced. It did not seem in the least like the headquarters of a city board of charities, although much of the organized charity of the city passed through it under a more gracious name.

Mademoiselle Bassot and some of her assistants lived in the *house* all the time. They slept there, ate there, prayed there; and having no other life apart, they made the life they were living attractive. They were sensitive women. They had not developed pity-proof epidermis as a result of work among the poor. They shared the joys and sorrows of their neighbors. These were family affairs. And the whole sad busi-



**"THE HOOVERMITE"**

This little Miss Muffit has an American dress and is testing American sugar

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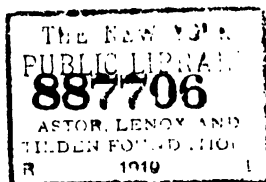
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The hotel where I lived in the beginning catered to my country-folk. The radiators radiated regularly, and this was strong evidence that a large quantity of coal was being consumed to add to the comfort of the transient population. There was hot water in the pipes every day of the week and on Sundays, to be used by the guests in any quantity by merely turning on the faucet, and if the food commissioner had come to that hotel seeking evidence of national famine it certainly would not have been found. The rates were

about Paris and it was usually possible to find suitable work for refugees and others seeking positions without loss of time.

The House of the Good Neighbor was a clearing house for people in distress, giving immediate help in emergencies, and coöperating with other agencies and organizations for the relief of human suffering. It was in touch with hospitals, dispensaries, maternities, pre-natal and post-natal homes, creches, canteens, milk and supply depots of different kinds.

The little boy whose mother worked in shop or factory and who therefore could not hear his cry for mother-help, came running with a splinter under his finger-nail. He knew just where to come, and he also knew that he would get a chocolate to ease the painful process of relief, and for this reason minor accidents were not regarded as unmitigated hardships by the juvenile constituents of the House of the Good Neighbor. The man, woman or child with toothache was given a card to the American Red Cross dentist in service overseas. Nurses were sent from this center to people with sickness in their homes to help them during their troubles, or to take the stricken one to the hospital where he might receive the best possible care.

Through coöperation with a society organized to supply layettes and furnish the additional linen and special equipment made necessary in a household by the advent of a new baby, the prospective mother unable to bear this expense was relieved of anxiety and responsibility in this connection. This maternity equipment was afterward returned to the organization,

and carefully washed, sterilized and made ready for the next parturient woman in need.

On account of the national shortage of fuel the homes of most women were cold, damp and unfit for them to remain in during the period of their confinements. These women were taken to the maternity hospitals and on their return were helped with the care of their babies, and given food, milk, or whatever was required and it was possible to secure for them.

There is a tragedy which not infrequently befalls unprotected and inexperienced girls which they usually suffer in silent despair, and at a cost of greater agony and additional danger conceal from their mothers and other members of their families because of the shame involved. When obliged to confide in somebody, they seek a confidante away from their own homes, hoping to escape the consequences of indiscretion and somehow save their people from reflected dishonor. Such girls sometimes came to the House of the Good Neighbor and always found help and protection.

The war seemed to increase these cases. Marriages were delayed. The safeguards thrown around young women were less effective. Life was uncertain; social order unstable, and the primal impulse of poor mortals with death brooding over them in the springtime of life, was to drink deep of love lest the cup be withdrawn from their lips. In many cases the whole cost was borne by the survivor—and the survivor was the woman. These women were encouraged to take up the burden of double parenthood and

carry it as their badge of redemption. After their accouchements suitable employment was found for them, and if they could not earn enough to support themselves and their babies, their earnings were supplemented by ways and means provided by societies organized for that purpose.

The *Mutualité Maternelle*, a philanthropic and patriotic society, which insured married women in case of the birth of children, and thereby increased the population by inciting in the minds of their policy holders a desire to collect the indemnity, conducted a milk depot at the near corner of the street. About one hundred and fifty babies were supplied with milk at this place, and for the sake of these little ones, as well as others in the district, Mademoiselle Bassot opened a children's dispensary with the financial assistance of the American Red Cross. An American woman physician was in charge of this dispensary, and was assisted by the French visiting nurses from the House of the Good Neighbor. One of these nurses had taken some training in the United States and sympathized with the American point of view. This combination was an advantageous one. The place was not only a dispensary for children, but a get-together school of French and American—language, psychology and medicine.

The training of monitresses in connection with the service of the infirmary and the House of the Good Neighbor, was one of the far-reaching phases of this work. The plan possessed great possibilities for social betterment. One evening a week was devoted to elementary instruction on the subject of health preser-

vation and practical care of the sick. This class was made up of the higher and more intelligent types of girls engaged in the factories and other industries.

After a course of study each young woman "adopted" a family, and became responsible for reports regarding the health and general well-being of this household. Juvenile delinquency had increased enormously in France on account of demobilized homes. The fathers were in the army, the mothers in the factories and the children in the streets.

The families of soldiers were usually chosen for "adoption," and it was the duty of each young monitress to fraternize with her "family." She studied the needs of her "children," took them to the country on holidays and helped their mothers care for them. She made reports to the head of this service regarding unsanitary conditions affecting her "home" which predisposed to sickness, and called attention to defects which might prevent the normal development of her "children," and to indications of weakness or ill-health in any member of her "family" in order that special precautions might be taken before it was too late.

The purpose of this plan was not to train nurses, but to help the working people and their children, and at the same time to develop the monitresses in order that they might be good, efficient mothers themselves in case they married, and useful women of value to any community in which they might afterward chance to live.

## CHAPTER II

### THE OPEN DOOR

THE House of the Good Neighbor never closed its doors. It was open at all times to people in distress. Every day in the week was reception day for the friends and neighbors who needed help, assistance and encouragement.

Monday was mother's day, and in the morning the working mothers came for the week's allotment of the government sewing. This work consisted chiefly of garments—shirts and pajamas, to be made for the soldiers. These articles were cut by a military cutter and delivered by the thousands to the House of the Good Neighbor for distribution in the district. Seventy centimes (about fifteen cents) was paid for the making of each garment, and about three thousand francs a month was disbursed through this center. These poor women could not work in the munition factories because their children needed attention at home, but they had the *Allocation Militaire* from the government, and with this extra work they were able to eke out a living for their families.

Their husbands were at the front, and many of them never returned. A large number had already given their lives for France and for the world. And they came to the House of the Good Neighbor, those wives

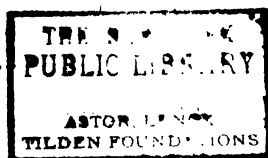


**HOUSE OF THE GOOD NEIGHBOR MONDAY MORNING**



**SAINT MATILDE INSTRUCTING THE MONTRESSES**





and widows, leading little children and bringing the bundles of finished work for the week.

I had been in France about a month before I met those sweet faced women with their bundles. I had become accustomed to the maimed and the mourning, but a new shock was in store for me. Think of thousands and thousands of pairs of common pajamas, beautifully made by hand because the women who made them have no sewing machines. It is the same all over France, and from the standpoint of a woman the greatest need of that country is for sewing machines and washboards.

On Monday afternoon when the assignments had all been made and the women paid for their work, there was a social and educational hour during which household economics, care of children, sanitation and other matters of practical interest to housewives, and therefore of value to the nation were discussed.

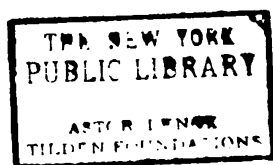
Through the president of the National American Woman's Suffrage Association I had become acquainted with Madame de Witt Schlimberger, the president of the National French Woman's Suffrage Association, and that gentle woman with a French-German name, and an ardent French soul came one Monday to meet the mothers at the House of the Good Neighbor.

In a kind, persuasive way, she delivered a mild, ante-bellum talk on the subject of woman suffrage, carefully restraining and modifying any opinions she considered too radical for her audience. They were poor women. Not one of them wore a hat, but at the conclusion of the address, when a general discussion

ensued, the progressive opinions expressed by those young working mothers astonished the president of the national society. War had taught them to think straight, and the president afterward told me that she was getting old, and she feared that she was not keeping abreast of all the phases of the woman movement, and when I repeated this to Mademoiselle Bassot she lifted her saintly eyes, and, with an inimitable shrug of her expressive shoulders, remarked that the movement had outrun us all.

The *Réformés No. 2* usually came on Tuesdays, although they were welcome at the House of the Good Neighbor whenever they chose to come. The class known officially as *Réformés No. 2* was made up of men who had been incapacitated for military service by sickness, usually tuberculosis, and discharged from the army without a pension. This designation distinguished them from the *Réformés No. 1* who had been incapacitated by wounds received in the service and discharged with a pension. Aside from the money allowance the man who had lost an arm or a leg was much better off than the one who returned to his home with an incurable infectious disease which endangered his family as long as he lived.

A national society, known as *La Protection du Réformé No. 2*, had been organized for the purpose of helping these men and their families. The Levallois-Perret applications for aid were made at the House of the Good Neighbor. The assistance provided was of a meager and wholly inadequate nature, but everybody felt that these men had suffered an injustice and the small allowance made by the society to the House of





**GIRLS' DAY ON THE BOYS' BATTLE-FIELD**



**SOLDIERS OF FRANCE**

the Good Neighbor for distribution was eked out in every possible way. Great pains were taken to teach these men how to protect their families, and to prevent the spread of the disease from which they were suffering. They were wholly incapacitated in many instances, but when they were able to do any work positions were found for them which they could fill with the smallest possible danger to the public.

Wednesdays were reserved for the entertainment and instruction of little girls: *Ouvroir des Futures Femmes de France*. On Thursdays the older girls came in the morning and the boys in the afternoon. The future men and women of France had been flocking to that place for years. A path had been worn by their little feet from the corner of the street straight up the stone steps to the door. On some occasions there were so many of them that they literally overflowed into the walled garden at the rear of the house.

That diminutive garden tried its best to be a playground for hundreds of children and did remarkably well for its size. War was the only game worth while. It was declared against the Germans every Thursday afternoon when the boys between eight and twelve years of age assembled. To and fro they marched and counter-marched, giving and taking orders, charging with fixed bayonets, and crying, "*Vive la France*," and "*Vive l'Amerique*," whenever they saw me at the window.

The first Battle of the Marne was fought and won over and over again on that little backyard battle field. The hosts of the enemy marching on Paris for

their Christmas dinner of 1914 were met and put to flight. The great retreat was always a feature. With hanging heads, but furtive, hopeful glances, they marched slowly backward from the rear wall toward the house which represented the prize city promised to the Hun. And from a window in a room on the second floor back the world looked on with bated breath while the fate of mankind hung in the balance.

Would they never turn? There was no need for worry. They would turn at the right time or contradict the history of France. The French are a spiritual people. They wait on inspiration which never fails—and those were French boys. A *coup d'éclat* could be depended upon at just the right moment. During the retreat a brilliant military tactic was taking form in the mind of the commanding general. The psychic impulse was transmitted to the entire army. Everybody felt it—even the spectators. Something was going to happen!

They had reached the tree near the back door. Trees have always figured conspicuously in great movements for liberty: witness the Charter Oak, and the Oregon Spruce preserved by Fate to furnish planes for the allied forces. The goal was in sight. The enemy was overconfident. The world at the window trembled.

"Halt!" The command was sharp and incisive. The whole army came to attention. "Retreat no farther, but die here for France!"

"Charge!" Around and around the tree they went, surging forward and backward. The enemy staggered, broke, turned and retreated in wild disorder.

**"Vive le Foch!"** Down with the Boche! The rout was complete. The imaginary cry of **"Kamarad! Kamarad!"** was heard above the sound of battle, but no quarter was given. The invading army was cut to pieces, and the remnant that escaped annihilation clambered over the rear wall, with the smell of the savory flesh-pots of Paris in its nostrils, and beat it to Bingen, or some other place beyond the Rhine, while the victorious heroes marched proudly back and received their decorations without delay in the court of honor established on the rear steps of the House of the Good Neighbor.

These children are natural actors. They have artistic temperaments and vivid imaginations, otherwise the sham battles would have been impossible, for the very good reason that not one among them was willing to play the Boche. The German army was an imaginary army. The French boys would not represent the fighting men of the enemy. Naturally, they all wanted to play Foch, but there was no difficulty in filling the French ranks; poilu or commanding officer, what did it matter, so long as they were on the right side. Indeed, it was a pretty fine thing to be a big, hairy poilu. There isn't a real boy in the world who wouldn't rather be Esau than Jacob, and there isn't an honest-to-goodness French boy who would play the Crown Prince for a fortune.

The American uniform was very popular with those young soldiers of France. Levallois was not in the line of march toward the front, and when an American soldier got out of the beaten path, or drifted over from the American Ambulance Hospital at Neuilly, into



that town of famous perfumes and no bath tubs, he found himself not without honor. Indeed, he was apt to have more honor showered upon him than he wanted. To the inhabitants he possessed all the attraction of a new type of hero, and no matter how private and personal his visit might be, he gathered a following of kiddies and arrived at his destination with an escort that varied in number according to whether it was before or after school hours.

This was a greater tribute than if the Mayor and all the dignitaries had met him at the gate. It was a spontaneous expression from the heart of the people of the town. Whatever the fathers and mothers of the world say in the privacy of their own homes, their children repeat in public, and the attitude of the French children toward the American soldier was the best possible index of the feeling of the whole nation.

The American soldier in France during the last year of the war looked mighty good. He looked very much as the French soldier used to look in the United States about 140 years ago. In addition to all of his other attractions he had the charm of distant lands where wonderful candies grew in war time, and by hanging around when the mail was delivered the sugar-starved children managed to get a substantial share of the sweetmeats sent to their friends in the American military and civil forces.

This friendly stranger from a strange land where things are done on a colossal scale aroused great expectations. Nobody knew just what he was going to do next. His possibilities were limited only by the imagination of a very imaginative people, and those

little hero-worshippers followed him with wide expectant eyes, confidently predicting miracles which it was up to him to perform.

On a certain festive occasion a children's entertainment with a rather pretentious program was staged at the House of the Good Neighbor. It was an all-star production. The most talented youngsters available were doing their bits. The final and most effective number was a tableau, "The Prince and the Sleeping Beauty." The Prince (aged nine) had just discovered the Sleeping Beauty (aged eight) and had struck the pose he had been practicing for at least three weeks, when who should walk up to the door but a Y. M. C. A. man who had just come to Paris from the American camp near Chalons.

A man who came socially to the House of the Good Neighbor was always an occasion for tea and cake. An extra ration of sugar was slipped surreptitiously into his cup in order to encourage him to return. But this man was more than an event. He was a sensation. I should have been startled myself if I hadn't known that there was such a striking appearing man in the world. He was six feet four inches tall, straight as an arrow, and the fact that he had lost an arm added to the effect. Standing in that seven foot doorway he certainly presented an impressive appearance. As a model for heroic militarism that Y. M. C. A. man in uniform might successfully have competed with any military figure the world has ever produced, from Richard the Lion-Hearted to Marshal Foch.

The tableau on the stage was instantly outclassed

and stopped short. The Sleeping Beauty awoke with a start and sat up wide-eyed. The Prince lost his pose and took on a far more interesting one that he had not practiced. A real giant had suddenly stepped into their fairy tale and no prince or princess could compete with a giant for juvenile interest.

The show was over, and the children, actors and audience, surrounded the giant from over the sea. They examined his legs in order to be quite sure that those tall, sustaining columns were real. They climbed upon chairs to reach his face with their little hands, and scrutinized the mystic triangle on his empty sleeve, lamenting the loss, gloating over the slaughter of the enemy that must have occurred at the time of the sacrifice, and confidently wagering that he could clean up a whole Boche company with one arm.

There had never been such a day at the House of the Good Neighbor. The children refused to disperse. They hung around the door until the hero came out, and then danced at his heels down the middle of the street because the sidewalk was not wide enough for the company. There was no candy or near-candy to be bought in Levallois, but every shop on the line of march sold out all its nuts, fruits and near-cakes, and the last we saw of that Y. M. C. A. man in khaki, he was going toward the street-car at the head of a troop that looked for all the world like the procession of the Pied Piper.

Prior to April, 1917, the French were not saying much about Americans, but after that epoch-making month they could not say enough. How Lafayette saved America was the favorite theme of orators from

the primary grades in the public schools to the Chamber of Deputies. And, since there are "tongues in trees" if that big tree in the little back garden at the House of the Good Neighbor had been able to speak our language it might have told a lot about our revolutionary war. The older boys were primed on this subject and there was a star orator among them, a regular four-minute man about twelve years old, who had evidently been chosen by his fellows to educate any Americans who might chance to come their way.

On and off the platform he was always on the job. The American uniform was never allowed to pass without the salute of as many voices as happened to be in the group. "*Vive l'Amerique!*" those youngsters would shout on the appearance of an American in khaki, quickly surrounding the astonished audience of one or two as the case might be. Then the orator stepping briskly forward and bowing in a formal fashion would begin at the beginning and deliver his regular charge to Americans. The speaker's admiring compatriots were always attentive and respectful, punctuating his periods, and sometimes anticipating his impassioned climaxes with enthusiastic applause.

That speech usually precipitated a discussion of our Revolutionary War, and after listening to it several times I began to wonder what part Americans had actually taken in the birth of our nation. I could not understand French very well, but I comprehended what was being said. I could scarcely believe my ears. For the first time I realized that certain phases of the war that gave us a free and independent gov-

ernment are not emphasized at our regular Fourth of July celebrations.

In America I had heard the American side, and at the House of the Good Neighbor I heard the British side from a highly qualified British woman of militant proclivities, and the French side from the boy orator, who, on account of his tender years, could frankly express the opinions which his elders might be prompted by a sense of delicacy to withhold. We were given full credit for starting the Revolution, but according to young "Mirabeau" we didn't have much to do with the finish. The French slant on the Battle of Yorktown sounded like an American newspaper report of the activities of our forces on the Western Front during the winter of 1917-18. Nothing French was left out.

George Washington was not mentioned, but that was our part of the story, and the Americans who heard that speech had no doubt that he was there. Ah, that was an epoch making French victory, and there was nothing that delighted our souls more than the news of a French victory. We were glad to hear that the French forces under Lafayette and Rochambeau, supported by the French fleet, won the Battle of Yorktown, thereby saving America and all the world.

This was the grand climax. It was always received with enthusiastic applause, in which those of us to whom the speech was familiar joined heartily in anticipation of the peroration in which we knew he was going to say that the fate of mankind was again in the balance, and after a hundred and forty years

Americans a million strong were crossing the ocean in the opposite direction to pay their debt of gratitude with interest. The finish was a eulogy of everything American, and after listening to it the least we could do was to waive all claims to the glory of Yorktown in favor of the soldiers of France who crossed the sea so long ago in slow, slow sailing ships, and died that Liberty might live.

There was nothing in the history of the allied nations that seemed to give such general satisfaction during the recent war, as the outcome of the American Revolution. It appears that everybody won. From a French standpoint, the French won. According to a new light in the British Empire, the best spirit of Britain won, and from a purely American point of view, every man and woman born in the United States of whatsoever lineage, is perfectly satisfied that we won.

The war had changed everything. There was nothing old under the sun. The Monroe doctrine had been extended to include both hemispheres and the intervening high seas. The illusion of isolation upon which we had been resting in fancied security, had been knocked higher than Gilderoy's kite, and strange to say, we were all glad of it. *The Battle Hymn of the Republic* was being sung in St. Paul's Cathedral, and in that French munition town the American eagle was screaming at the top of his voice to the tune of the *Marseillaise*.

That boy was a joy to Americans, but there was no compensating comfort in the views of that soft voiced British militant. She was a fascinating, disquieting

creature. She kept me mindful of my P's and Q's. She referred quite casually to the American Revolution, as the victorious campaign of 1775-1781 in the World's War for liberty, which began in the year one and might possibly end in the year 1920. She always connected it with Armageddon and Runnymede and other incidents of history too numerous to remember, and from her standpoint our Declaration of Independence was a sort of supplement to Magna Charta.

This English "cousin" of mine was a mild mannered woman—terribly meek, and whenever I looked at her I felt quite certain that the meek would inherit the earth. In a passive, immovable way she maintained that Washington, Pitt, Jefferson, Fox, Henry, Hamilton and Burke, all good Britishers, were really fighting on the same side, and that the loss of the American Colonies was a just penalty which Britain paid for following after strange gods. She said that George III, the Hanoverian king of England, was afflicted with the selfsame, hereditary, divine-right disease that had broken out in a more malignant form in his distant relative Wilhelm II and last, and intimated placidly that George and his Junkers had led the Huns of the eighteenth century, and that the Hanoverians, Hessians, Hohenzollerns, Hapsburgs, Hindenburgs, and all the H's representing hell on earth had been arrayed against mankind just as they were in the current war, and that it was a lucky thing for England and all the world, that there was enough true blue British blood in the American Colonies to

give them a good drubbing which served them jolly well right.

This kind of talk in a mild form was gratifying in the beginning, but after I had heard it from every direction and gotten the French and British variations I began to feel concerned. The outcome of the present war gave me no uneasiness. I knew we were going to win, but there were times when I felt that as a nation we had better keep our wits about us or we might lose the Revolutionary War yet.



## CHAPTER III

### FEEDING THE MULTITUDES

WEDNESDAYS and Thursdays were happy days at the House of the Good Neighbor. Some of the children had suffered grievously, but childhood sheds grief and holds joy, and so they came with tripping feet, the future men and women of France—the fathers and mothers of twenty years from now. But where were the fathers and mothers of to-morrow, the children who played at the House of the Good Neighbor twelve or fifteen years ago?

They were all fighting for France: the boys in the army and the girls in the munition factories. The House of the Good Neighbor had sponsored no slackers. The young men and women who had grown up in that atmosphere were doing their duty, and many of their mothers and wives and widows came to the weekly receptions that were held Saturday afternoons.

*Bons* were served at these functions instead of tea and cake. And what was a *bon*? A *bon* was a bit of printed cardboard which could be exchanged in the market for necessities according to the denomination of the *bon*. There were *bons* for meat, milk, vegetables, shoes and clothing. Life was hard in France during the war, but the system of *bons* and

*bonuses*, creches, canteens and allocations, made it possible to survive.

Some of the visitors needed *bons* for almost everything, and they were issued at times for strange commodities. I recall a family consisting of a father, mother and two children, who came for *bons* for a wedding trousseau. This trousseau included a coat for the bridegroom, a warm winter dress for the bride, shoes and stockings for the two children and a layette for a new member of the family who was expected in the near future. A wedding trousseau had been provided for this same family a year before when the winter was coming on, and this time the House of the Good Neighbor added a marriage license and sent a representative to the wedding.

It was sometimes my privilege to assist at these receptions and pass *bons* to the visitors. One of the most popular *bons* called for twenty centimes (five cents) worth of chopped horse-meat, but owing to personal predilection and prejudice it was impossible for me to pass this particular *bon* to a French woman impoverished by the war, without registering abject apology in every outward and inward aspect.

Those horse-meat *bons* kept me awake at night. During the day while my mind was running in a semi-scientific rut, I realized that horse-meat was nutritious, and argued with myself that my aversion to it was due to silly sentiment and provincial addiction. Preference for special diet was merely a national habit that should not be encouraged when food was scarce. This seemed perfectly clear. There was no other way

of accounting for the strange things people eat in the different parts of the world.

Several years ago I lived at a pension in Berlin where purple sauerkraut and pet rabbit was served with painful regularity. Every new American was pleased with the appearance of this unknown delicatessen, and accepted a generous portion, after which he felt like reporting the matter to the health department and suing the house for obtaining money under false pretenses.

That high colored kraut looked so toothsome and tasted so reactionary that it destroyed our faith in the things made in Germany. It was surrounded by a lovely purple liquid that always awakened delectable memories in the mind of at least one person to whom Fate had been kind and whose fortunes had been cast in a new country where the woods were full of wild huckleberries in summer, and the delights of real huckleberry pie were among the many blessings.

The thought of huckleberry pie in Berlin was almost impossible. It required a violent stretch of the imagination. But the vision was worth the effort, and while the natives were consuming large quantities of that combination of cabbage and rabbit, with manifest evidence of great relish, the aforementioned person indulged consoling memories and entertained an uplifting hope for the future.

The kraut looked good. The color scheme was perfect, but it tasted like decayed gherkin, and it is doubtful if any of the Americans who lived at that pension ever think of that particular indelicacy without an involuntary spasm of the epiglottis, and a con-

current feeling that whosoever was raised on such pabulum must be "fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils."

But Berlin is not the only place where people eat queer things. The conduct and cuisine of all countries is more or less queer from the standpoint and established tastes and customs of other countries. Rational consideration of the epicurean idiosyncrasies of nations, expressed in bird's nest soup, and other alien edibles, together with anxious reflections, recurring with each German victory, on the fact that the cats and dogs and all the rodents which infested Paris were consumed during the siege of 1871 before the city was forced by starvation to surrender to the Prussians, tended to reconcile my mind to horse-meat as a regular ration, but my stomach steadfastly refused to capitulate to any kind of argument.

While the guests at the fine hotels in Paris were taking on weight the country at large was hungry. The adulteration of foods, which had formerly been regarded as an art to be practiced in such a way as to avoid detection on pain of penalty, had become a patriotic necessity, and all that was left of some of our dearest delicacies was the outward and visible form.

On one occasion I discovered some Jordan almonds in a most unlikely place. They were perfect in appearance: smooth, delicately tinted, and the full, almond shape so clearly outlined was a thing for the eye to feast upon. Nobody was looking, so I snapped up the entire stock with the unworthy intention of hoarding for the winter. In the privacy of my own

room I put my tooth into one of those decoy candies, and the disappointment has destroyed my faith in appearances forever. The outside of this imitation sugar-coated almond was made of gelatine, but it is doubtful if a food chemist could have determined the precise nature of the roughage with which that fair seeming capsule was filled. Everything that looked good, looked bad after that. Human confidence is easily destroyed. One taste of bitter aloes and the weaning babe regards the fountain that has nourished him for nine months with a longing lack of confidence.

Food was shipped into France in concentrated form and the roughage was added locally. There was no shortage of roughage. The saw-mills were running night and day, and saw-dust was plentiful. It was not necessary to add agar-agar to the porridge. And the horses were probably wondering why they got so many splinters in their gums, and felt so full but hungry after meals.

My scientific training had not been entirely lost. It sometimes helped a little. I knew quite well that a dietary composed of articles containing hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen in the proper proportions, plus certain carbonaceous substances, was capable of yielding energy, rebuilding tissue, and sustaining life no matter how they tasted, and war time was no time to humor a fastidious appetite.

Under the circumstances my distaste for horse-meat was inexcusable. It was nothing less than unpatriotic. Some of the people who came to the House of the Good Neighbor were regular boarders at the municipal canteen where horse-meat was served twice

weekly. The food had not injured them, and in order to conquer a rebellious stomach which craved favors and indulgence in the face of famine, and to acquire a comprehensive and sympathetic understanding of what horse-meat meant to other people of pronounced prejudices, I resolved to go to that canteen and eat a dinner of horse-meat ragoût for the sake of discipline and personal education.

In the middle of the day when my courage was at its zenith I set out in secret so that no one might witness the possible failure of my project. The experience certainly was educational and disciplinary. In both these respects it surpassed my expectations, and as a triumph of pure reason over all the revolting forces of habit and instinct, I still maintain that horse-meat is nutritious. I did not need anything more to eat that day. Knowing the value of horses in France I could not help wondering what that animal had died from. Whether it had been killed by accident, or had succumbed to an infectious or non-infectious disease, which as a matter of nutrition did not make the slightest difference. The idea that an animal must be specially slaughtered for human consumption was another foible which presented itself like the last straw at the very moment when it was most apt to turn the scale. The meat was tough, sweetish and hard to swallow. It tasted like imported mule. During my conscious existence I have never eaten mule, but in some previous incarnation I must have had that experience, because I recognized the taste instantly.

The food was prepared behind a counter in full view. The woman who served the ragoût hot from a

cauldron that held about a ton, spotted me at once and gave me the lion's share. "Unto every one which hath shall be given, and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away," and in accordance with this tenet of injustice that female dispenser of the city's bounty cut down the portion of the hungry man and woman next in line. I tried to exchange with my fellow sufferers and although their eyes were covetous, my lack of language and their plaguey French politeness prevented them from accepting my offer.

Their patient endurance of injustice made my misfortune the harder to bear. They did not resent this flagrant show of favoritism. My portion was nothing less than monstrous. I had twice as much as any of those poor hungry people. I felt like the dog in the manger, or a bloated plutocrat caught with the goods, at least, what I think I would feel like if I were one. Those good people tried to explain something, but I could not understand them, and I did not find out until afterward, that the canteen served enough for two meals at one time, and that patrons were supposed to come in pairs, or take half of their portions home with them for the next meal.

My position at that table was embarrassing. There I sat with the evidence of depriving that poor couple of their just dues piled up on my plate, painfully conscious of malfeasance, but utterly unable to right the wrong. I tried to look honest, hungry and unconcerned, but a tenderfoot is a tenderfoot in Klondyke City or Levallois-Perret, and nothing but actual experience can ever make him anything else. It was

impossible to deceive anybody. I could not even deceive myself. A still, small, disconcerting voice mocked me from within.

That was a memorable meal. Whenever I think of it I hold heroically to the thought that it was good—and it must have been, for all my messmates on that occasion relished it hugely. Lacking their presence and encouragement the power of mind over matter might have failed me after the first nibble, but with hundreds of eyes cast in my direction it was a case of conquer or die—perhaps both. So far as the process was entirely voluntary it was a success. It was easy to chew, but hard to swallow. Like Banquo's ghost it would not down. Rather, it would not down without great difficulty.

That dinner was a foolhardy undertaking. No conscientious cannibal ever had more qualms about eating his favorite missionary. My decision was irrevocable, my will resolute, but the rest of my system was uncertain. That great sea of faces somehow took on the undulations of the ocean. There were waves and waves of them. Many of the men had whiskers and the girls long hair. I felt sea-sick. In that hazy, horsey atmosphere, the rapid growth of whiskers seemed visible to the naked eye, and it was easy to fancy the aspect of that multitude changing as it does in dreams and moving pictures.

After Jack London's "Call of the Wild," everybody was "harking back" to prehistoric ages, and I had an unlettered friend who liked the idea, but did not get the word just right. He used to "hike back" and since that time in all imaginary excursions into



the dim and distant past I have preferred to "hike." On this occasion I "hiked back" about ten million years without the slightest effort and imagined myself seated among my bewhiskered forebears at a tribal barbecue—the feast of the hippophagians.

That place was redolent of horse-meat ragoût. Whenever I passed it afterward I could smell it for a block. Other kinds of meat were served there, but it was always horse to me, and I cannot even write about it without experiencing a sympathetic salivation due to that self-afflicted outrage against my established sensibilities. But there is no doubt that horse-meat will sustain life. Every logical cell in my cerebrating system argues on the affirmative side of this question, while something stronger than logic or reason—an insubordinate power with a center of control located in the hypogastric region takes the negative and sticks to it with a tenacity which must have its origin in instinct. Hippophagy and anthropophagy are manifestly related words. They look equally bad on paper. And to a person who has enjoyed the loving companionship of men, women, and horses, a hippophagist seems well on the way to cannibalism.

That restaurant was operated by the Maire and served about two thousand meals a day at less than cost. There was a charge of eighty centimes (twenty cents) for two meals, luncheon and dinner, when people could pay that amount, and if they had no money they were not turned away without food. This double portion was served at one time, and patrons were not permitted to take one meal at half the price.

Children were the favored class. Their parents were permitted to provide for them at a fifty per cent. discount. A stream of women and children passed in and out carrying away family portions in pans and buckets. Food purchased in this way cost less than the amount of fuel which would be required to cook it in their own homes. The menu at this canteen was varied. In addition to the *pièce de résistance* there was always soup, bread, vegetables, rice, and salad or fruit to be had for a small extra charge.

The Socialists were running an opposition canteen on the same street, known as the *Restaurant de la Maison Commune (Syndicat Socialiste) Confédération Général du Travail*, and if I have omitted any of the title under which this eating house was operated, it is not because I have the slightest desire to favor the establishment conducted by the city government. My sympathies were with the Socialist Canteen. I had not eaten there. The *Femme de Charge*—I refer to the acting female major-domo—said that the food was much better than that served at the municipal canteen and offered to prove it, but I had inside information regarding that place and a comparative test was not necessary to convince me of the truth of her assertion. Besides I was loth to prove the matter personally. One experience was enough. Her statement was reasonable. It would be poor politics for the *Syndicat Socialiste* to permit the city to give more for the money than it was doing. This would be fatal to all its hopes and ambitions for the future. What would be the use of changing parties and per-

sons in power, if on the very face of existing conditions it was a case of six of one and half dozen the other?

It was not horse-meat day at the Socialist Canteen. That was an unfair advantage. The major-domo pointed with pride to her shining cauldrons, and delving to the bottom of the largest with a big ladle, brought up real mutton stew containing onions, carrots and other luxuries. An appeal to abstract reason may be good politics in places where the inhabitants have had enough to eat for so long that they take food for granted as they do water from the mountains, and their unsatisfied desires are chiefly academic. But where primitive needs have not lost their pinch, and people think straight from hand to mouth, mutton stew with carrots and onions is a very convincing argument. Those canteens were not far apart, and they ought to be good places to board for about a month before elections.

The *Cantine Ecole des Garcons* was supplied by the municipal restaurant, but I did not know this and my prejudices were not aroused when the serving woman came into the dining-room of a large school for boys with an immense pot full of beef ragoût. The dinner call was sounded and the boys came crowding in, exchanging vigorous nudges, elbow thrusts, friendly kicks and other evidences of fraternal feeling. They were a pretty cheerful looking crew in spite of the somber black coveralls, which they were surely compelled to wear to protect their suits, for no boy would wear a pinafore from choice. Each one had a school-bag strung over his shoulder containing

his plate, spoon, bread, beverage, and in some cases, fruit. There were a few bottles of milk which must have been prescribed by a physician, because milk was hard to procure except for babies, but most of the boys brought sour cider, or some kind of cheap wine.

The ragoût was manifestly made according to Huck Finn's favorite recipe: a sufficient quantity of all the alimentary materials necessary for growth, heat and the replenishment of the normal waste of tissue had evidently been put into the pot and boiled together with appetizing condiments. There was great joy when the lid came off and the room was filled with *ragoûtant*, mouth-watering odors. Some of the best parts of the stew volatilized charging the atmosphere with invisible particles very gratifying to the olfactory nerves of most of those present. The air seemed rich and satisfying and the boys took long inhalations with unmistakable exhibitions of approval. They were hungry and the combination seemed to strike them just right. It was highly nutritious, and it certainly possessed a savor and flavor rarely developed by the most fastidious preparations of food.

The culinary art for which France is justly famous had not been reduced by the war to ragoût and nothing but ragoût. A few real chefs who had survived the hazards of their profession to the ripe old age of military superannuation (fifty-five years) were still running cookstoves in cuisines instead of forges in munition factories.

These kitchen treasures served only in very select places where people who were not averse to employing

large private means for the purpose of gratifying personal appetites could actually procure a roast pheasant setting on little baked potatoes and other delicacies in gravy, garnished with its own gorgeous, bright hued wings outspread, shining glass eyes, and head up-stuck on a flexible wire, "*au naturel*"—so much so indeed, that the first impulse of the novice was to seize the bird lest it fly away.

Nothing in peace times ever looked or tasted half so good as such a pheasant served in a warm room to an accompaniment of sweet sounds. Of course it was unfair to feel warm in a country where most people were shivering, and to eat pheasant where most people were hungry, but it was certainly very agreeable in a purely personal way. Unfortunately, worldly experiences, no matter how promising, are not apt to assay one hundred per cent. bliss, and like the offending fly in the ointment some of those feathers had to drop off and get into the gravy.

The few places that still catered to the gourmet represented a very small phase of life in France, but the canteen was a national institution. It was not provided with broilers and divers cooking conveniences; boiling required less fuel, and ragoût was the strong staff upon which it leaned in foul or fair weather. There were all kinds and conditions of canteens in every part of the country: canteens for the soldiers; canteens for the officers; canteens for the school children; canteens for working women at the factories; canteens for prospective and nursing mothers; municipal canteens for Tom, Dick and

Harry, their wives, widows and all their family connections.

With the advent of the American Red Cross and the Y. M. C. A., luxurious canteens were opened where the French poilus ate oysters and other delicacies for a change occasionally. Canteens, mobile and stationary, followed the American Expeditionary Forces, serving American sandwiches, hot cakes, canned fruit from the Pacific Coast, and finally, to meet the last need of a highly developed service, the Salvation Army appeared in the War Zone bringing the homey doughnut, and life in France from a canteen standpoint was complete.

## CHAPTER IV

### OUR SAINTS

ON All Saints' Day our saints all went to church before the first gray streak of dawn. Our saints were real saints in spite of their protestations to the contrary and their single-hearted devotion to mundane matters, or rather, because of this consecration. Seclusion was not conducive to their kind of sainthood. It was perfectly safe for them to be out alone. Indeed, they were apt to be out alone at any time of the day or night when anybody was in need of help, and early in the morning on Sundays and other holy days, they could be heard groping down the stairs on their way to church. One by one they might have been seen gliding swiftly and silently along the murky streets by the cold stone walls, if the darkness and fog had not concealed them so completely from view.

When such women leave their warm beds and go to a cold church before six o'clock on a dark winter morning with a shawl over their heads, they go for religious reasons. They go to pray—and their prayers are answered. They are given the spiritual strength to answer them themselves. Our saints prayed for France in her darkest hour, and then they went out and worked for France and their strength and endurance was far more than physical.

On All Souls' Day, the day set apart for religious

commemoration and intercession for the souls of the faithful departed, our saints, no doubt, said a special prayer for their own dead. They were all in mourning. A glance into the Notre Dame and other cathedrals on that day gave one an idea of the extent of the bereavement of the nation. Thousands of women knelt in the dim aisles with bowed heads, their long, black veils falling around them to the floor. Mothers were praying for the souls of their sons, widows for their husbands, sisters for their brothers, sweethearts for their lovers, and many a woman with a babe in her arms, unmindful of her own great need, saluted the Madonna and child and prayed for the father of her little one.

Saint Matilde, the chief of the visiting nurses at the House of the Good Neighbor, had no official patent of saintship. She will not be eligible for beatification until after she dies. But a saint is a saint regardless of ceremony, and I recognize one the instant I see her working with the sick. Our head nurse had a Mona Lisa smile, a mortal beam in her eye, and other outward and visible signs of an understanding soul. She systematically fluoroscoped everybody, including her friends, and smiled sympathetically as though she loved humanity because she found it so human and full of faults of flesh and spirit, and so ready to be redeemed by the right kind of a redeemer.

Perhaps Matilde was ambitious. Who knows? Ambition takes such strange and varied forms. Some women are ambitious to scintillate socially. They spend real energy on this futility. Others would be central stars in the movie sphere. Many long for



wealth and power, and in her secret soul Matilde may have been a climber. I hope so. The static temperament is so dull and monotonous. Climbers are always dynamic, and I strongly suspect that Saint Matilde was ambitious to climb to heaven itself. Suffering humanity was her chosen ladder, and at every step she seemed to pause while she pulled her ladder up with her.

She was a cheerful, comforting sort of a saint, and in the reconstruction of the world which is to follow the war it is to be hoped that there will be more like her. Orthodox saints are a sorry looking lot. They seem so repentant. Their pictures probably do them injustice. Perhaps the sins of the artists are immortalized in the beautifully penitent faces of the saints they paint. This is unfair. It is impossible to look at some of these masterpieces without living over our transgressions, and wondering what the artist had on his conscience which he expressed in the face of a perfectly innocent saint.

Saint Matilde was a delicate woman and I used sometimes to take her slender wrists in my strong hands and hold her so that she could not move just to exhibit my superior strength,—but she had real woman power. In the daily endurance test she was always on duty long after I was exhausted. Her work was never done. Her hours were like the hours of the mother of a large family: all day long, and subject to call whenever any one needed help at night.

Her eyelids were usually weary at the late dinner hour, but when she raised them, there was the twinkle, the beam, the radiant spark of a blithe spirit.

Heroism in the different branches of human service is largely a matter of habit and fidelity to duty. It is part of the day's work. Saint Matilde knew that the tubercle bacillus is the most deadly enemy of mankind, and yet she went without fear into all the nests of tuberculosis reported at the dispensary. Her life was spent amid the mortal wreckage of this disease, and in order to help these unfortunate people and to teach them how to protect the uninfected members of their families, she lived among them exposed to all the dangers from which she would safeguard them. The other nurses were as faithful, but she was the head, the inspiration, the teacher and leader of the visiting nurses in the anti-tuberculosis work. She did not direct these activities from a safe place—she led, and I sometimes followed into abodes of wretchedness that words cannot describe.

The House of the Good Neighbor had naturally engaged in the anti-tuberculosis crusade. In trailing the sick and unfortunate this disease had been found at the end of every blind alley. It is a cruel agent of death. It does not kill in a clean, straightforward way like meningitis, or a swift obliterating bullet, but leads its victim step by step through every grade of human misery that ends at the Potter's Field. It gradually saps his strength and reduces him to poverty. Instead of the proud supporting member of his family, he becomes a burden and a danger to them in their hard struggle. Love rarely stands the test. It usually turns to dread in their eyes and his cup of bitterness is full when he realizes that they want him to get well or die. He moves from com-

fortable quarters steadily down the line from wretchedness to greater wretchedness, spreading this insidious pestilence along the way. Without means of a fair living he cannot shake it off, and before it finally lets him go, it fastens itself upon some other members of his household, making the process continuous. Did I say that his cup of bitterness was full? Well, it overflows when this happens and he goes to his death knowing that he has lived long enough to destroy his family.

So many tubercular people were coming for help to the House of the Good Neighbor that it was found necessary to open a dispensary and this was done under the supervision of Doctor Louis Guinon, one of the most distinguished specialists in France, who gave his services two mornings every week.

There were about sixty patients at the dispensary on the day it opened. Those examined and found to be tubercular were given the best treatment possible under the circumstances. Medicines were of little value. The need was for food, sunshine, rest, freedom from anxiety, and segregation of the sick to prevent the disease from infecting others. It was an impossible task.

In connection with this service we visited six homes on the following day. The history cards suggested the places where the need for help was most urgent. In each of these nests of tuberculosis one or more persons had died from the disease, and one or more cases had developed from these sources of infection. These poor people were living and coughing and expectorating in crowded quarters. They shivered at

the suggestion of a draft. Fresh air was cold and damp, and there was no fuel available in France to heat these dank and mildewed habitations. Many of the large buildings had not been dried out since the beginning of the war. The cold stones seemed to sweat and the moisture ran down the walls. Body heat was too precious to be wasted through the windows, and the close personal contact between the sick and the well, together with undernourishment and overwork, made these hutches regular breeding holes for this fair seeming plague that has survived cholera, small-pox and other comparatively kindly allies of more hideous outward mien.

The sanitary conditions surrounding most of these places were unspeakable. There were no plumbers or carpenters to keep old tenements in repair. Such places were bad enough before the war, and with most of the men and women of value at the front or in the factories these buildings went to rack and ruin in very short order. Drainage from ordinary household operations ran down the outside walls and through the courts into the street gutters, and there were reeking, leaking open toilets that it was impossible to approach without soiling one's shoes. The filth was indescribable and the flies had evidently developed a resistance to winter weather, for they were swarming and active in spite of the lateness of the season.

In, perhaps, the worst rookery we visited, one child had died of pulmonary tuberculosis, another of meningeal tuberculosis, a third, suffering from Potts' Disease had been sent to a sanitarium, a fourth exhibited a withered leg and an ankylosed ankle, due to

tubercular arthritis, and a fifth poor little wraith of a child was still uninfected. This family lived in one damp, dirty room, and long suffering had evidently crushed the spirit of the mother and left her indifferent to her surroundings and to anything that Fate might have in store for her in this world or the world hereafter.

The next place was cleaner and drier but the outlook was about the same. The difference was the difference between the beginning and the end of such a scourge. A young mother and six children were living in two rooms. This woman was the widow of a *Reforme No. 2*, who had contracted tuberculosis in the army and had been sent home for that reason. It was a pity he had not been killed in action. But luck was against the poor fellow. He lived a year, reduced his family to abject poverty, and left them as a legacy, not the *Croix de Guerre* with its reflected glory and accompanying pension, but the *peste de guerre* that he had brought home from the trenches.

One little boy was hopelessly infected, and his sister, a picture of health, who had been sent to a preventorium in the country six months before had just been returned to the nest. This entire family of seven slept in the larger of the two small rooms, and the mother who occupied the bed with the sick child had become infected.

In another of these tubercular homes there was a family of nine living in three small rooms. This apartment was in a foundation. It was more comfortable and better in every way than the other places described. The father of this family was a tuber-

cular *Reforme No. 2*. This man had tuberculosis when he joined the army and as soon as it was discovered he was sent home. The mother, who was probably the source of infection, had the lingering form of this disease. She had been suffering from hemorrhages and was very pale, feeble and emaciated in appearance. Eight children had been born to these people, and they must have enjoyed a special immunity, for although they had lived all their lives exposed to this contagion they had miraculously escaped infection.

Three times three is not always a lucky number. In the Rue Pasquier there was another family of nine, the father, mother, uncle and six children crowded into two small damp rooms. Filth and misery was their portion. One of the men had been blinded in battle. He had a book printed in relief, the Braille method, and was trying to learn to read by the sense of touch.

As a human habitation this place was the last word in wretchedness. It opened on a foul court behind a public wine shop. Drainage from the building flowed through the court into the street. One of those antique toilets of "old Roman construction" which served the patrons of the saloon and also the tenants of the building in the rear, stood at the front and only entrance of this incredible hutch. The place cannot be described. From a sanitary standpoint it was a revelation. Picking my way from cobble-stone to cobble-stone I resolved to be more frugal in the use of the superlative. It should be carefully conserved. In making reports on sanitary conditions the time is apt to come when it is badly needed, and the ensemble

of that ungodly hole proved how mistaken were my previous conclusions that some of the others were the worst possible.

Those plague spots were very populous. Flocks of children followed us through the narrow alleys. The more unsanitary and dangerous to life and health the places were the more children were in evidence. Poor kiddies! The world is very cruel to its helpless little ones. No wonder the death-rate among them in all big cities is so high. Under existing conditions the average couple cannot afford a family. Children inevitably drag them down to the lowest depths of poverty, and it naturally follows that the largest families inhabit these unlivable holes. Prudent, voluntarily sterile couples are not found in these wretched places. So long as they have no children they are able to live comfortably on their earnings. Of course their lives are impoverished in another way, but they are not obliged to watch their babies suffer and die. Children should bring joy to their parents—joy that more than compensates for the sacrifice involved in their care. But a family reduced to living in a sty on a wholly inadequate stipend cannot be happy or healthy, and it soon begins to adjust itself to its environment by dying off. And meanwhile men—comfortable men,

“In fair round belly with good capon lined,  
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,  
Full of wise saws and modern instances,”

sit on commissions and seriously consider the alarmingly low birth-rate, and high death-rate among chil-

dren. The cause and remedy are so obvious that they are hard to evade. It is difficult for these gentlemen who are so well supported by their brothers, to negatively disclaim responsibility for their brother's children, in the fatuous or sophistical reports and recommendations that are made from time to time. One of the measures suggested in France to encourage the birth-rate is to bestow a medal upon the heads of large families. But a medal won't pay the milk bill, and when every child that is given to a nation becomes a step up the social ladder for the family, as it ought to be, instead of a step down toward poverty, sickness and death, that nation will not need to worry about its birth-rate.

Saint Matilde loved these poor little ones, and they instinctively sensed the sentiment and flocked around her striving to touch her hand, or kiss her cheek when she leaned toward them. As an expression of affection, personal contact seems necessary to the French temperament. The children kiss and caress each other, and while this evidence of tenderness is touching, a sanitarian cannot help feeling that this practice may be a factor in the spread of disease.

A preventorium was conducted at Dinard Bay in connection with this work where anæmic children from tubercular families were sent for the purpose of building up their constitutions, augmenting their strength and resistance and in this way decreasing the probability of the development of the disease. The effect of this treatment tended to demonstrate that tuberculosis is largely a matter of fair living, for the children grew strong and rosy at the preventorium



where they romped and slept in the open, and had plenty of wholesome, nutritious food, and declined very soon after they were returned to their wretched homes. Whenever it was possible the parents of these children contributed a pittance toward their support at the preventorium. The amount was not sufficient to swell the budget, but it had a tendency to stimulate a family sense of responsibility for the health of its members. In the cases of mobilized fathers the children's *allocations* were contributed.

Terrestrial saints are usually serene, self-subjugated souls. They conquer personal pride, but this incentive to worldly achievement is not lost, it simply suffers a "change into something rich and strange." It often takes the form of institutional pride, and crops out quite frequently in municipal and national manifestations. I had seen the worst part of Levallois, and perhaps that was the reason I was led around to the Mairie—the pride and glory of the city.

It was a fine stone building at the head of a street. The setting had been carefully selected and embellished. Architectural dignity and artistic harmony had not been sacrificed for the sake of economy of space. This was the center of municipal activity, and the perfection of the plan was in keeping with the magnitude of the purpose.

Coming from the abyss of poverty and humiliation I found it impossible to approach this impressive edifice without steadily dwindling in my own estimation at every step. No wonder people suffered without complaint. No wonder they came to the House of the Good Neighbor in their distress. Why should a mere

individual, a unit, less than a unit, a cipher, worse than a cipher, a liability, a figure on the wrong side of the ledger, consider himself of sufficient importance to ask for personal attention at such a place. This was the cold heart of the great city, the streets leading out in every direction were arteries, and the stream of people were mere corpuscles carrying life to every part of the system.

The affairs of the town were administered at this building. A long line of women, approximately two hundred, were waiting for their sugar, coal and bread cards—for official permission to purchase their lawful allowance of these articles. Coupons were attached to these cards and torn off by the grocer at the time of purchase and kept as a record to show that sales had not been illegally made.

At the *Bureau de Bienfaisance* a large number of people were waiting for relief of different kinds allowed by the Mairie. At one of the windows stood a line of women soon to become mothers. They were waiting for the pittance, one franc fifty centimes daily, provided by the city for indigent women unable to work, for four weeks prior to their confinements. There is usually difficulty regarding this benefit as it is contingent upon the applicant quitting work, and it is impossible to foretell just when the expected birth will take place, and therefore difficult to procure data that will satisfy the bureaucrat on this point.

The patience of Job was a perfectly human manifestation. He was sadly afflicted, and forbearance comes with affliction. Many of those people in the Mairie had been waiting for hours, but there was not

the slightest sign of impatience. Time is the stuff that life is made of, and the deliberate manner in which the French official kills the time of the people he is employed to serve, seems nothing less than cold-blooded murder to an American.

The *Grand Salle des Fêtes* was an attractive reception hall. There was a stage at one end for speakers, and an official looking platform for marriages and other ceremonies at the opposite side of this salon. My attention was particularly directed to the ceiling decorations, and I gazed rapturously upward and endeavored to simulate just the right degree of appreciation to save myself from being classed with the untutored American savage who still exists in the French mind. Those decorations may have been good or bad. They certainly looked good to me, and in view of the fact that they were on the ceiling of a great reception hall of a public building in France, it is quite safe to pronounce them good.

But the plumbing—words fail me. My companions were loth to show me the plumbing of that fine building, and I was obliged to resort to subterfuge in order to find out whether or not it ranked with the frescoes. In point of antiquity, I think the plumbing should be given precedence. The frescoes were probably copied from some of the works of the Renaissance, but the plumbing fixtures were of the classical old Roman pattern, such as I vaguely remembered having seen on exhibition in the museum at Pompeii.

France is rich in treasures of art, and whenever the conversation at the House of the Good Neighbor took a turn that placed my country at a disadvantage, I put

on the armor of sweet humility and endeavored tactfully to introduce the subjects of plumbing, washboards and sewing machines. These are the things wherein our genius is expressed and our women incidentally saved from drudgery. This is where we shine. The only fourteenth century cathedrals we have to boast of, are those we left on the other side of the Atlantic, but we certainly can point with pride to our twentieth century plumbing, and every person who has served in France will cheerfully bear witness that we have something to be proud of.

American plumbing was my strength and my weakness. It sometimes stirred me to indiscreet enthusiasm. It is easy for a person who is obliged to bathe in a dishpan to develop a perfectly fine frenzy over our bathroom fixtures. Reticence is an effective guard and shield, but when plumbing was mentioned I occasionally lost control of my tongue and risked the imputation of American boastfulness.

As a nation we surely are boastful. In this respect we are like the countries we sprang from, but our boasting takes a new form. Age exhibits strange delight in the things of the past, and boasts reservedly of ruins and catacombs, while the joyous voice of youth proclaims the skyscrapers of the present and the still greater skyscrapers of the future. Men might boast of commercial supremacy, or military prowess but I boasted woman-fashion of the great American Electric washing machine, a mechanical contrivance for saving women from the back-breaking, soul-shriveling drudgery of washing clothes by hand.

The story of Aladdin's Lamp did very well for an

age when miracles were a matter of the imagination, but this is the age of real miracles, and to women in France where knuckle-washing is still practiced, the story of standing on a ranch in the wild west, or in the frozen zone of Alaska, and pressing a button and having the washing done, puts Aladdin's Lamp away back behind the Pyramids where it belongs.

## CHAPTER V

### TWO ENGLISH WOMEN A GENERATION FROM "HOME"

THE occupants of the House of the Good Neighbor were not all saints. There was one English woman to whom casual reference has already been made. She was called "Brother Wolf" after the savage wolf of Gubbio converted by St. Francis of Assisi. This wolf, a terrible man-eater, decimated the population of Gubbio until St. Francis went out to meet him and brought him home, tame and gentle, to spend the rest of his life with the brothers in the monastery. He was christened "Brother Wolf" and died some years later after a holy and edifying life.

The trouble with our wolf was that she had never been converted, and as for her leading a holy and edifying life, well, discretion is the better part of valor, and this is the point where self-preservation, the first law of nature, prompts me to hold my tongue in the side of my cheek. She recognized me instinctively and assigned me a place among the animals with herself and the prime minister (the tiger). Because I had the habit of pacing up and down, and my coat was brown with a tawny breast, instead of striped or spotted, she put me in the panther class. Our dens in the menagerie were adjoining and for several months we did our best to live up to our totems.

She was an exasperating person, with a frail body and the dauntless soul of a suffragette. I was very fond of her—at times. She was quite harmless except when she seemed so. Suave politeness is a danger signal in one of English blood. I know the breed. Whenever she manifested an affirmatively meek attitude, I was on guard. The tone of her voice was soft and caressing at such times, and the genteel inflection with which she pronounced the word “bourgeois” carried a subtle personal intimation which always made it difficult for me to control the risible muscles of my tattle-tale countenance. She was delicate, obdurate, and had many of the irritating old English peculiarities which were part of my own inheritance, plus the French phobia for drafts. Her lineage was half French, and although she had lived in France the greater part of her life, England was still “home.”

I was English too, it seemed, in spite of my protestations to the contrary. My mother was from Portsmouth and my father from Kent. That settled it. What is a mere matter of locality in which a person happens to be born, live and vote, compared with the generations that have given him blood, bone and brain? A woman might be born in Timbaktu and exercise citizenship in that benighted place, but that would not make her Timbaktuese. Kipling was born in India—and was there ever such an Englishman? There was no chance for argument; no question of nationality. I was English, and ought to be dashed glad of it. There were times when I felt like a poor relation—a *rapatrié*. She recognized me as a fellow-

countrywoman, accepted me as such, and proved her good-will by ill-treating me as one of the family.

While she was tolerant of my Americanisms, she conscientiously rebuked them, gently, subtly, insistently, and her constructive criticism indicated that she hoped to restore my hereditary type in all its perfection. This experiment was not a success, but the lady did not change her mind regarding my nationality. As time went on her original opinion was more than confirmed, and she finally concluded that I was "steeped to the knees in pigheadedness" and so true to type, so impossibly English that I was a hopeless "Yank."

She felt quite certain that my fresh air madness would be the death of her before the end of the winter. Every evening before going to bed I opened my window and a gale blew in. During the entire night this dank, miasmatic air whirled around my room seeking whom it might enshroud. Most of it went up the chimney, but a tempestuous gust all too frequently escaped under my door, swept the intervening corridor and invaded her private chamber through the key-hole and the narrow but extensive chink that surrounded the entire entrance.

This was dangerous and she protested repeatedly. We argued the matter in good old English, family fashion. My father was from Kent and my mother from Portsmouth, and these genuine British felicitations reminded me of my childhood and awakened the inherited instincts which probably originated away back before the time when King Cnut sat on the beach at Ramsgate and disputed with the tide.



Finally we agreed that no consistent protagonist of self-determination could deny the inalienable human right of committing suicide in the manner most agreeable. My "Brother Wolf" conceded this cheerfully, but she contended that it was a prerogative which by no means carried the additional privilege of endangering others incidentally.

As an affirmative expression of outward respect for opinions regarding which I entertained private reservations, I endeavored to control the atmosphere in my apartment. But so long as the breeze was admitted, wanton whiffs continued to escape into the hall, and one day I heard a tapping, a tapping at my chamber door accompanied by a soft recurring cough, and peeping out I discovered a *Reforme No. 2* with hammer and tacks, who had sealed every crack and cranny of my door and that of my neighbor with strips of felt, and from that time on I had all "the rheumy and unpurged air" admitted through my window for my own exclusive use.

"Brother Wolf" was the last surviving member of a family that had been prominent as revolutionists and reformers. She was the final genealogical flicker of a light that had burned with a steady flame of beneficence through succeeding generations. Out of the dissolution of the house of her fathers there remained a remnant of a fine library, a few pictures, several pieces of furniture, and some rare bits of bric-a-brac. She herself seemed part of the reliquiæ: an isolated human fragment — the last disconnected segment of a family that had been identified

with the history of England and France for a long, long time.

She was not interested in social work except the great social work that her forefathers had helped to plan and execute. The letters of Garibaldi to her grandfather, which were carefully preserved in an antique cabinet with communications of equal moment to her great-grandfather, meant far more to her than the important current correspondence between the House of the Good Neighbor and different agencies working for the present and future of the French people. She conceded the value of this service, but the cost was too high. Her family history, confirmed by years of personal observation of the self-sacrifice of the beautiful Marie-Jeanne and her co-workers, was convincing proof that mankind amounted to just one perverse and crooked generation after another. Ingratitude was the inevitable reward of such devotion, and the thing to do was to beat the Boche, and then let the rest of the world go to perdition, each and every individual by his own personally selected and particular route.

Hidden away on the second floor back of the House of the Good Neighbor, in that wretched street where poverty looked out of every window, there was a little treasury of a room where "Brother Wolf" served tea in dainty cups that like herself had seen better days, but never better service. Her affluent patronesses, and all sorts of persons, took after-dinner coffee, and with scant appreciation of the blessings of belonging to the first generation recruited from the ranks, cast

furtive, yearning glances at the unmistakable evidences of hereditary upper-tendom.

We were glad that the House of the Good Neighbor gave so many dinners to rich people in the interest of the poor. This joy was not on account of their company, although they were good company; nor on account of reflected social prestige, for in this respect we were without ambition. Lineally speaking, the lady with the pedigree had run the gamut socially, and was well on the way back to the point beyond which I had never ascended. But we were glad of these dinners because we were a hungry pair of animals and the regular fare was nothing to boast of; but for days after these special repasts, particularly when our lucky stars were in the ascendant, and some of the expected guests failed to appear, we lived like princes on the fat of the land, or rather like Lazarus on the leavings of the rich man's table.

Mademoiselle Bassot had the soul of a French "sister." She was inspired with that fervent, single-hearted devotion to an ideal that has led so many of the gentlest women of France to the uttermost ends of the earth. Her ruling passion was the welfare of little children upon which the fate of any nation depends. Experience had convinced her that in order to help a child it was necessary to begin with its father and mother as early as possible and to work with them intimately and with boundless love even as they worked with their children. To this end she hoped to be able to establish social centers evolved on the idea of the House of the Good Neighbor in every poverty stricken arrondissement of Paris.

Such ambitious plans required funds, and in the interest of the poor and disinherited, our lady gave dinners to the rich and influential. These dinners were served in the combination-room: the reception-room, dining-room and audience chamber where at other times the unfortunates who came for help and counsel were received. On these festal occasions the procession of misery made up of *Réformés No. 2*, helpless widows with their fatherless children, and all kinds of people sick and in distress, was temporarily deflected. The windows were opened, the atmosphere was changed and there was nothing to indicate the common usage of the banquet-room, except the germs of disease that in the mind's microscopic eye could easily be discerned clinging to the walls and draperies with tooth and toe-nail.

Far be it from me to affirm positively that our lady was wholly actuated by a high ulterior motive. But those of us who lived in the House of the Good Neighbor knew the theme of her existence and we knew that it ran through every variation of her life. Several French, English and American women of wealth had contributed toward the fulfillment of her heart's desire and she was grateful to them. She liked to have them come and bring their friends. These were new "prospects." On such momentous occasions she personally supervised the cooking of the dinner and washed the spinach with her own hands, and while she graciously served her guests the best food that could be provided, ten thousand hungry children pleaded through her wistful eyes.

Not all of these people were kind. Some of them

had stone faces. They ate the bread of orphans and their hearts were not touched. This always roused the original ferocity in the soul of "Brother Wolf," and our mutual instinct was to go out and stalk them at some dark place. Indeed on these occasions I felt quite sure that her precious pedigree was no better than mine. Something stirred within me, and while I lacked the loot to prove it, the deep ancestral urge that prompted me to go out and hold up those people gave me an exalted feeling of having descended—descended is the right word—in a direct line from Robin Hood or one of his associates in that delightfully romantic age when plutocrats carried their capital with them. In those good old days big business was done between taverns on the turnpike, and the conscientious qualms of wholesale operators were assuaged, even as now, by bestowing a modicum of the booty on the poor.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE FALLING BIRTH-RATE

ONE of the wonders of the war is the way in which women have lifted the burden of labor from the shoulders of men and set them free to fight. There is an atavistic suggestion in this achievement. In the ages when tribal existence made it necessary for men to devote their energies to fighting and hunting, women did all the work. As civilization advanced men laid aside their arms and relieved women of the heavier tasks of life. The industries were gradually taken from the homes and hands of women and developed along all lines. Seemingly separate spheres were created for the sexes. But men and women cannot advance or retrograde without each other. Wherever they go they go together, and while women had not been actively engaged in many of the industries, they had marched sympathetically along by the side of their men, and they possessed the latent ability to do the work of the world. It takes ages to evolve from a lower to a higher state, but it seems that reversion can be accomplished over night. Like a world of demons men suddenly relapsed to barbarism on a colossal scale, and with amazing aptitude women took up their old, new load and staggered along.

The outbreak of the war was followed by general

industrial disorder, and the people who depended upon their daily labor were temporarily destitute. Men were called to arms, and women were called to take their places where it seemed physically possible. This was comparatively easy for women without children, but the readjustment was very difficult for the mothers of families. These women were confronted with a choice of evils. If they worked in the factories their children were neglected, and if they did not work their children were hungry. In this crisis there was no class of women who needed work so much as the mothers of helpless children, and no class had such a hard time getting appropriate employment. Their double tasks naturally resulted in relative inefficiency. They were always the last chosen and the first dismissed. A prospective or nursing mother was at a great disadvantage. No working woman admitted that she was *enceinte* so long as she could conceal the fact, because she was usually discharged, or given less important work with smaller pay. The wives of soldiers had the military *allocations*, but the cost of living was so high that these small allowances did not go very far.

Fecund nature can be depended upon to operate under almost any handicap, but there is a point at which she lies down and gives up the ghost, and that point had been reached in France by the third year of the war. The price of motherhood had become prohibitive. Women could no longer afford to pay it. And the birth-rate began to indicate a general revolt against the age-long injustice that the mothers of men have suffered. The war and what the war meant to

women was the last straw. They had quit their great natural jobs. Fifty per cent. of them had walked out.

For several years prior to the war, the birth-rate in France had not been so high as to alarm the Malthusians, and the inadequate man supply was undoubtedly due in large measure to voluntary sterility maintained for the purpose of escaping the unequal social responsibility, the suffering, danger, personal sacrifice and economic burden incident to child-bearing and child-rearing. The war had increased the force of these inhibiting influences, and created others far more restraining in their effects. Food was scarce; milk was hard to obtain; and fuel was out of the question. The bare necessities of life were precarious, and the future so uncertain that prudent women—the kind that make good mothers—were unwilling to leave well paid positions and face the inevitable tragedy of helpless motherhood.

The man power of the next generation was a problem for the nation to ponder, and some perfectly wonderful plans for increasing the population had been evolved and submitted to the government. From the standpoint of the State it was imperative that children should be born in larger numbers. But from the standpoint of the average woman this involved a personal calamity and a crime against the unbegotten too terrible to contemplate.

Women were taking no part in the public discussion of this mooted matter, but they had a great deal to say in private. They were not considering the national needs or the abstract ethics of the question. That was a philosopher's business, and they were not Ph.Ds,



those women to whom motherhood had been a tragic personal experience, and the possibility of its repetition was a dreadful menace.

This vital topic was discussed by men as an abstract national problem, but a prospective, over-burdened, or bereaved mother was not likely to get the national point of view. She knew from experience that the nation did not share the suffering or responsibility. That was her problem, and there was nothing abstract about it. On the contrary it was concrete, and when it had to be met and solved, she would be obliged to meet and solve it alone, at the time of her weakness when the function for which she was primarily created had left her helpless and handicapped.

These women were not mathematicians, but they knew just how much money they could earn while they were well, and just how much was required to support their families. They also knew that if they were sick or disabled their incomes would be lost and the children they already had would go hungry. And so they took a limited, feminine view of this grave question that was treated in a broad, abstract way by men of means to whom it was a problem of impersonal patriotism. But to the poor women who sustained the economic injury, suffered the pre-puerperal distress, the agony and danger of parturition, carried the handicap and paid the bills, this was a concrete and painfully personal matter.

They did not argue this proposition. The evidence indicated that they had arrived at a unanimous decision, and were maintaining a conspiracy of silence in this respect. Perhaps it was merely that their side

nous voulons vivre  
aidez-nous!

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of the question was so clear, intimate and well understood, that argument seemed fatuous and foolish. It was the common every day theme of their existence and when they spoke on the subject they usually related some personal experience, and their simple statements of the facts as they existed would surely have silenced Socrates himself.

When a bereaved mother says, "My baby died from the effects of cold and hunger," she can scarcely be asked to inflict life on another helpless little one with no better chance of survival. And so the majority of women who made munitions devoted themselves exclusively to that work, and children were not being born in numbers necessary to support the life of the nation.

Among the civil population the death-rate was greater than the birth-rate. More people were going out of the country than coming into it. Half the yearly increase had already been lost and the birth barometer was falling steadily. The direct damage of all Germany's infernal machines had not been so great. National extinction was foreshadowed on the horizon, and a commission was appointed to study the question of depopulation, "the other catastrophe which at this moment threatens the French nation."

When a commission is appointed to study a question everything connected with it becomes more alarming. The rule held in this case. Statisticians were called to the task. Native and alien they volunteered in large numbers. This was an opportunity of a lifetime. With that peculiar alacrity which distinguishes the monomania of specialists, they conferred together,

got out their pencils and figured the nation off the earth.

This was good measure. It was more than anybody wanted. But why worry? Those experts were not prophets, they were scribes. They had received no revelations. Their forecasts were based on arithmetic. They were men of little faith, and that little faith was in the ten digits and the combinations thereof. They put no trust in men or nations. They believed in figures, and if it be true that figures do not lie, then, let us prepare for the worst. According to exact mathematical calculations, France, beautiful, vivacious France—fighting France that seemed so much alive to the unlearned, was in reality expiring. Her days were numbered. She was passing away. And savants of different nationalities were sitting at her death-bed, counting her fluttering pulse and waiting to sign the death certificate. Carefully computed on a basis of eons and ages, the right and scientific way to determine the length of the life of a nation, France, figuratively speaking, was drawing her last breath, and would soon be “one with Nineveh and Tyre.”

The decline and fall of a nation is a titanic catastrophe. It cannot occur spontaneously. Vicious causes of corresponding magnitude must be responsible. “The love of money is the root of all evil” and the crimes which had undermined the vitality of the nation had not been committed for pleasure, but for profit. Find the profiteer. That was the problem. But it was not so easy. The case was complex. The testimony was conflicting. All the forces of evil were privately indicted and pleaded, “not

guilty"; even the lowly midwife was accused, and while it was impossible to fix the responsibility, it was generally agreed that whosoever and whatsoever was to blame should be exterminated forthwith root and branch.

These matters were discussed in whispers and secret conclaves. The forecasts of the investigators were disquieting. Suppose the soldiers should get hold of them. What would happen to the morale of the army? The written reports on this subject were carefully censored and many of them pigeon-holed for the good of the nation. If it became generally known that France was going to die so soon anyhow, men might question the wisdom of giving their lives to save a practically defunct country.

The precautions taken to prevent inside information regarding the impending catastrophe from leaking out and disaffecting the forces of the country were unnecessary. Fighting men had lost confidence in figures. The war had disproved all the theories previously promulgated by the wise men of the world, and a redeeming faith was surging in the souls of those who had grown strong in suffering—a faith in the future of France that figures could neither blast nor sustain.

France is the land of the *coup d'éclat*. You can never guess what she is going to do next. She has the habit of astonishing the world. The unexpected thing is her natural manifestation. Let us wait awhile and withhold our bodements. As a token of thanksgiving after the defeat of the Boche her next surprising exploit may be a bountiful birth-rate.

This is a pleasant prophecy, and it is to be hoped that it will in no way offset the good effects of the dire predictions of the official and unofficial forecasters of calamity. A healthful undercurrent of consternation was created among the elect of the land by this arithmancy. The signs and portents pointed out with such precision were viewed with alarm in the right quarters. These prognostications of national decline got under the pachydermic sensibilities of people who had reason to suspect themselves of indirect responsibility, with the result that efforts were being made in the right direction to prevent the impending euthanasia.

The solons of the nation were called upon to solve this problem and the cat was out of the bag. Solons cannot be trusted with talking material. Shame forbids me to pursue this subject except in reference to a foreign country. The duties of solons are to talk, debate questions, create laws and appropriate funds, and there can be no doubt that each and every representative of France "seen his duty and done it" to the best of his ability.

All nations are tolerant of talk, but the official expenditure of funds must be carefully considered with reference to returns on the investment. An unsuccessful experiment had already been made in the matter of subsidizing the *infant industry*. As early as 1913 a law had been passed allowing an absolutely helpless woman one franc daily for a period of four weeks immediately preceding and following the birth of her child, and although this amounts to about ten dollars more than a woman gets in any other country

under such circumstances, no increase in the birth-rate had followed the granting of this *allocation*.

This was discouraging. The members who had doubted the wisdom of voting money to prospective and nursing mothers were justified in the stand they had taken by the failure of the experiment. They all conceded the importance of a large, native-born constituency, and would gladly have passed laws creating a surplus population. But, how to enforce them. That was the question. It was a difficult problem; a quandary; a subject for Solomon, or somebody with large experience and understanding of the psychology of women.

Women were keen regarding other phases of the national service, but toward this particular branch they were exhibiting an abnormal and unpatriotic apathy. Something would have to be done to arouse their dormant sense of responsibility; to awaken their national pride. Would they like decorations? Medals were cheap. They might be cast of base metal in large quantities at small cost. It was reported that Germany had been bestowing iron crosses upon the mothers of future soldiers with gratifying results. Germany's success in getting things done certainly amounted to genius. But the mind of the French woman had not been molded to serve a national plan. Her tastes were individual and as varied as her capabilities. She was nothing less than a "ministering angel" in the singular, but "uncertain, coy and hard to please" in the plural.

Things were looking pretty gloomy when somebody was inspired with a saving thought. All French

women had one characteristic in common—love of country. Appeal to their patriotism. This was the most promising plan, and the orators of all parties and professions lifted up their voices and called for babies in the name of the nation.

Give us babies or we perish—nationally. This was a strong plea, but the women were silent, while echo seemed to answer in minor mother-tones, if we give you babies they will perish, and from away beyond the world came the faint wailing cries of the children who wanted to stay and had never ceased calling to their mothers' hearts.

Depopulation was a dismal prospect. There was little use winning the war, if there was to be only a remnant of the race to rejoice in the victory generation after generation. The impending catastrophe could and would be averted. The plan which might finally run through the whole social fabric, could be stated in four words: *encourage the infant industry*. And all patriotic citizens to whom this was an impersonal matter seemed willing and anxious to promote the good work.

Whenever two or three scientific looking men, or well-fed, well-groomed, prosperous appearing gentlemen beyond the military age, were gathered together in earnest and solicitous communion of thought, the chances were that they were discussing the birth-rate. This is a favorite theme for moralists who have passed the Songs of Solomon and reached the Ecclesiastes. How lucky it is that wisdom comes with age when it can't do much damage!

For some reason deep rooted in the masculine con-



sciousness maternity is a moral obligation which obtains regardless of conditions; a sort of vicarious atonement for the sins of the world—and maybe it is, for it is the price Mother Eve paid for the love of Adam, and the market has been steady ever since. The price is altogether too high, but every woman has to find this out for herself, and by the time she realizes it Fate has given her mother-love, which more than makes up the disillusionment.

In a hazy, limited way, a few super-souled men were beginning to glimpse what motherhood meant to self-supporting, self-respecting women, and disregarding all precedents these men were making practical recommendations that had already reached the extravagant proportions of five francs daily to be paid for a year after the birth of a child to a woman who had given up a position in which she could support herself for the sake of propagating the species. These recommendations were made boldly over the weight-carrying signatures of their proponents, such men as Professor Pinard and Charles Richet. They were not afraid of pauperizing a nursing mother or a new born babe. Perhaps they realized that nature and society had already pauperized this pair. That they were obliged to depend upon extraneous support, and in view of the fact that the woman had relinquished a regular salary, and was serving the state to the extent of helping to save its life, it was no more than fair that the state should reciprocate.

When God endowed woman with the creative function involving such endless possibilities for good or evil, He gave her a help-mate (what did Adam need

a help-mate for?) to do the "chores" of the world and provide her with food while she was engaged in the wonderful work of building a human being. The war had taken her help-mate, and it naturally followed that her primary function was suspended.

There is probably no industrial occupation for which women cannot qualify, but they have a more important calling. By virtue of a divine function coupled with human intelligence they have the power of giving or withholding the life of nations.

This is God's supreme commission. Man is woman's great work. Cell on cell she builds him up and delivers him to the world at the risk of her life. His survival depends upon her sacrifice, and God gave her mother-love to make that sacrifice a joy. During his infancy she nourishes him at her breast. This service is its own reward. Life holds nothing half so sweet. Did you ever see a mother look down at her nursing babe? He is her treasure. He is the hope to which she has dedicated her life. Throughout his childhood she guards him and cares for him according to her light, and if he dies love's labor is lost, and her heart is buried with him. But when he lives and grows and his mind unfolds, and he finally reaches man's estate, this is the consummation of her great work—the fulfillment of the law of love and life. Did you ever see a mother look up at her son? He is her finished product. He is her gift to the world.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE INFANT INDUSTRY

WHATEVER else may be said of the average Frenchman, he loves France with all his soul. A Frenchman who isn't willing to give his life for his country isn't a Frenchman. But the gift of life is not the supreme test of loyalty. Many a man who would be willing to risk his life would turn away sorrowfully like the rich young man if asked to give his fortune. The man who gives his fortune is the true, hundred per cent. patriot. And while it would be hard, except among the lowly, to find many that would register one hundred per cent. plus, on such a test, the necessities and revelations incident to the war had developed a good many people in France who ranked very high in this respect.

Gleams of hope were coming from all directions. Philanthropists were springing up in expected and unexpected places, and beginning to give back some of the money they had gathered from the poor. Millionaires were coming out of their self-afflicted seclusion and voluntarily offering their mite. Manufacturers were considering the advisability of dividing the spoils. And the clear-minded men who had provisioned the inadequate man-power of the nation away back in ante-bellum days, and as a practical expression of foresighted patriotism for peace or war, had

established "foundations" for the benefit of large families, were hailed as true prophets and benefactors of the race.

Many of these "foundations" took the utilitarian form of apartment houses, with comparatively well built, comfortable quarters, at low rates, for families of three or more children. No others need apply. But the mere matter of birth in regard to the qualifying member, was not an unconditional requirement. Many infants came to these places just in time to be born.

Apartment houses of this kind had been opened in practically all of the hand-to-mouth arrondissements and environs of Paris, and in many other French cities by different individuals, families and benevolent groups of men and women. The one in which the House of the Good Neighbor conducted an anti-tuberculosis dispensary was a fair example of the average type.

There were thirty-five "model" apartments in this building. That is, they were "model" as apartments for poor people go in France. They had running water and separate plumbing. An untraveled American will not understand the significance of the last sentence, but a native born citizen whose foreign service has involved a reversion to the pre-plumbing period of human development will appreciate the luxury of such an arrangement. From the standpoint of comfort and convenience these places would scarcely measure up to a "model" American apartment in a modern building run on a diametrically opposite plan, where people with children are not wanted.

In addition to running water and separate plumbing there were baths in the basement and a dry court provided as a playground for the privileged tenantry. The total cost of housing in this "foundation" was about five dollars a month, and for people with two children there was luck in the figure three. It meant cheaper rent and better quarters. And as soon as they were able to qualify they were permitted to move in and save money if they were fortunate enough to find such an apartment empty.

The tenants in these apartment houses enjoyed collateral advantages as well as low rent. Their landlords and landladies were a decent, responsible class of people. They seemed conscious of an obligation which transcended the collection of the rent. They were interested in the welfare of their tenants and this interest practically guaranteed steady employment. Besides, if anything happened that made it impossible to pay the small monthly assessment, there was help at hand instead of eviction.

These establishments were expected to pay the cost of upkeep, but not to yield anything more than nominal dividends. They were not built for profit. They were designed to increase the man-power of the French nation. The economic theory of race-suicide was being tested in a practical way. France had long since passed the stage where ignorance and irresponsibility could be depended upon to maintain the birth-rate. Normal creatures naturally long for offspring, and under anything like normal conditions this longing is sufficient incentive. But reproduction had become voluntary to a large degree, and the records in-

licated unmistakably that the risks and sacrifices were considered too great to warrant the undertaking. In a small way these "foundations" were meeting the great national need. They were relieving the pressure of poverty, and the results seemed to demonstrate that money could produce men.

And since money could produce men, and men could produce money, why not link up this endless chain and let it run in a smooth, natural way, instead of appointing commissions for the purpose of studying the subject of depopulation in the forlorn hope of finding some artificial remedy. Studying depopulation may be an interesting pastime, but the sensible people were running "foundations," creches and maternal canteens and getting results. They were not sitting on commissions. Do commissions sit or set? Anyhow they don't often hatch anything, and the "foundations," creches and maternal canteens were showing some pretty good broods.

Since the beginning of the Christian era, and before, perhaps, many of the greatest Christian experiments have been successfully conducted by Jews. They are an imaginative and practical people. One of them imagines a good thing and another is immediately found with sense enough to put it into practice. Some of those practical French patriots may be Gentiles, but those I met were manifestly of Semitic origin.

These people seemed perfectly satisfied with what they were doing. They were good business men and they knew when they were getting their money's worth. By endowing their "foundations" some of them had

arranged to beat the game of life. They had planned to extend their humanitarian activities beyond the allotted span. They had purchased immortality. It was a wise investment. There was nothing better in France, and as a letter of credit it may have some value on the other side of Jordan. Who knows?

At any rate everybody knows that the ordinary legal tender of this world cannot pass that boundary. Here and now is the time and place to use it, lest it be lost. Invested in humanity it improves the quality of the race, and yields an increasing dividend as the years go by, which neither moth nor rust can corrupt. But hoarded and allowed to accumulate it clogs the social machinery, creating morbid congestion and stasis, deteriorating and devitalizing the breed of nations, and inevitably reacting upon the wrong-doers by deadening their sensibilities, and producing physical, mental and spiritual dropsy.

Finally these misguided people die. This helps the world a little, but leaves the deceased poor indeed. Their losses are so great. They suffer more than death. They are bankrupt. Here is where death has a sting, and the grave a victory. Reduced to the lowest level they cross the line in their spiritual poverty as naked as the Kaiser and nobody ever hears of them again.

Amid the general giving, the common service and sacrifice, and the resultant spiritual uplift in France during the war, the blind treason of avarice was conspicuously exemplified by a wicked old man who had secured a great fortune to the damage of the country by operating an absinthe plant. He did not know that

he was a scoundrel. He had always paid his taxes and he thought that was the test of a good citizen. France had prohibited the sale of absinthe, and he felt so injured because his particular still had been shut off, that he refused to give his empty plant to the government for war work. Of course it was taken without his consent and he was execrated by the whole nation. But from his point of view he had been deprived of a profitable business, and a hundred prohibition propagandists could scarcely have accomplished as much for their cause as resulted from the adverse reactions produced by this one deluded old person going about sincerely protesting and complaining of his wrongs.

The ground floor of the Stern Foundation was utilized entirely for public service. Part of it was given rent free to the *Dispensaire d'Hygiene Sociale et de Prophylaxie*, conducted in connection with the House of the Good Neighbor, and the rest was used for the *Cantine Maternelle* maintained and operated by the family that established the foundation.

This was a great convenience to the qualified tenants in the building. The prospective and nursing mothers took their meals at this canteen whenever they were so inclined. Some of them were regular guests of the foundation. The food was better than they could afford to buy for themselves, and if they needed advice or care, it was the duty of the matron to procure it if possible. A small dispensary for the pre-natal care of women, and for nursing mothers and infants, had formerly been conducted in this connection, but the medical attendant had been called away by the



war and the work had been discontinued for that reason.

This was an uncommonly good canteen. It was listed in the "*Federation des Cantines Maternelle*" but it was financed wholly by the "foundation." It was part of the original plan and was installed when the building was constructed some time before the war, and was therefore well appointed. It was clean, light, warm, well-drained and dry. And that meant a great deal in France during the war. There was a large sink with good plumbing and facilities for plenty of hot water. The dining tables, metal ware, and kitchen utensils were shining clean and bright. The food was wholesome and appetizing. It was a good place to eat, and those to whom its hospitality was not extended often cast a longing eye through the window. The menu included soup, meat, bread, potatoes, vegetables and pudding, but no horse-meat. This queasy article of diet might have exerted a queer pre-natal influence. Alcoholic beverages were not provided, but the idea that pure water is a healthful drink had not gained general credence in France, and as a harmless concession to popular demand, a decoction flavored with cocoanut was served instead of wine.

Another maternal canteen was financed by this family in a crowded section of the Thirteenth Arrondissement within the walls of Paris. The rooms employed were not well adapted to this purpose. They had been used for a shop before the war. They were close, gloomy and unattractive, that is, they were unattractive to people accustomed to light and air and the ordinary comforts of life. But comforts and con-

veniences are relative, and compared with the home hutches of the women who lived in that district, these quarters were palatial. They fairly radiated good cheer. They were heated by the kitchen range, supplied with seats and tables, and were altogether so comfortable and attractive that the women were inclined to linger on cold days and turn the place into a neighborhood living room. The food was good. It was the same as that served at the Levallois canteen.

The "*Federation des Cantines Maternelle*" was conducting canteens and consultation centers for prospective and nursing mothers and their infants, in all the thickly populated arrondissements of Paris and in many of the outlying districts. Two meals were served daily at these places: luncheon from eleven until one o'clock, and dinner from six to eight in the evening.

Great tact and delicacy was observed in the entertainment of the guests. No discourtesy, brusque service, or impertinent curiosity was permitted on the part of attendants. Women were not required to give their names or addresses, nor encouraged to volunteer any personal information. One question only was asked, and that was the vital question. The plan seemed almost too human to be possible. We looked around for the impecunious female with influential connections and patronizing disposition who is usually to be found drawing a salary in such places, but there was no such person. Nursing mothers were self-evidently eligible and many of them brought their babies with them. These women were encouraged to come without a thought of fear or favor. The places be-

longed to them, and unless they used them freely the system would be a failure.

These canteens were run on rational lines. The fact that the prospective mother is abnormally shrinking and hyper-sensitive was well known to the management, and that this embarrassment was augmented in many instances by irregularities incident to the war, was no secret. Every effort was made to make the women feel that the dignity of motherhood resided in that state, and did not depend upon a social code formulated for the general welfare of the nation, and contingent upon the exigencies of war. The time had come when every baby was more than welcome, and its mother was a national benefactress provided she did not shirk her duty to her child. "Be a good mother" was the motto of these places:

"Honor and shame from no condition rise,  
Act well thy part, there all the honor lies."

And the rôle of devoted motherhood is a part that the French woman is temperamentally fitted to act with all her fervent soul. Perhaps one of the reasons why she avoids this responsibility so assiduously is because she knows the complete self-abnegation it involves. She may not want a baby, but when it comes—farewell, a long farewell to other interests. They all become subservient. France is the land of "Fantine." Where else could Victor Hugo have found such a woman? He did not create her. He merely put her on paper. She was there under his eyes—and she is there still.

Jean Valjean is there also: the man whose soul has

awakened. In a world of sharks, shysters and social slackers he actually feels the throbbing pain of suffering humanity, and realizes the agony of the mothers of little children during this era of death and destruction. These canteens were organized to serve such women. They were a sort of national guarantee underwritten by responsible individuals, that no child-bearing woman should want for food while it could be procured. About three million meals had been served since the beginning of the war at a cost of approximately four hundred thousand francs a year. Subscriptions had been made to this work from widely different parts of the world. Through the good offices of a French newspaper published in San Francisco, generous contributions had been received from California.

Some of the homes maintained for the care of women before and after their confinements were in sad need. I recall particularly one "home" on the Boulevard Montparnasse where women were received during the last month of pregnancy to await the ordeal—the agonizing, life-risking purgatory through which they were obliged to pass in delivering a human being into the world, and entering the high estate of motherhood.

This house had accommodation for forty women, but forty-five had been crowded in and were awaiting their accouchements, while ten others had been temporarily billeted at a creche near by, because it was impossible to make room for them. These were all young, unmarried women, and there is no human need so great, important and appealing, as the need of a

woman about to become a mother and who has no home. Still, business is business, and the landlords were not inspired with a humanitarian spirit. A more profitable use for the house had been found, and notice had been served upon the society maintaining the "home" to vacate at an early date.

The committee in charge of the work was at its wits' ends. There was no place to take the patients, and the society was practically at the end of its resources. The president told me that unless help could be found somewhere it would be impossible to support these young women and others continually applying for admission, during the winter.

The house had a fine walled garden, and was well adapted to the purpose it was serving. It was near the large maternity hospital and was visited daily by the obstetrician in charge, or one of his assistants, usually a midwife. Dinner was being served when we visited the place, and the women were crowded so close together at the table that they were manifestly uncomfortable. The food consisted of a sort of macaroni and lentils. No alcoholic beverages were in evidence—light wines or cider such as are commonly used in France. The place was cold, the women were scantily clad, and there were not enough bedclothes to keep them warm at night.

This was one of the many emergencies where the American Red Cross stepped into the gap and saved the situation. Another place was found and the Red Cross furnished beds, bedding and enough money, added to the amount raised elsewhere, to support the home for two years.

The president of the Parisian War Creches was chairman of the committee in control of several of these pre-natal and post-natal homes. Among the post-natal homes for mothers and infants into which she introduced me, there was one beyond the walls that it was a pleasure to visit. The mothers and babies looked uncommonly well, and therefore I suspect that there was some patron saint in human form, angels, I think they are sometimes called, who was favoring this place in a financial way.

The building was a ramshackle structure of barracks architecture, with a central court, that had been used away back in the era before the war as a Kneipp Sanitarium. Of course it was a modified Kneipp. In a wholly artificial environment it was utterly impossible to get back to nature, but it was easy to make believe and perhaps that had a curative effect upon the imaginary ailments of the patients.

Near the village of Wörishofen in Bavaria, where this beneficent "back to nature" movement had its inception and got such an impetus, there were broad meadows unposted with trespass signs, where the knee-deep grass was sprinkled with dew over night and ready for use in the morning; there were inviting puddles with foot-easing, toe-tickling mud that oozed up between horny, distorted and much damaged digits, producing delightful sensations and effecting results greatly to the disadvantage of the chiropodists; there were little green frogs and wiggle-waggley polliwogs warranted to produce glad childish laughter if there was so much as a strain left in a desiccated old soul; there were lovely ponds fringed with smiling water-

lilies, and rippling streams that babbled through the wild woods and in their pensive moods became deep, dreamy pools, finally flowing out and meandering through the meadows in search of unknown waters; there were hills and dales, glades and dells, groves of trees and sweet wild flowers in the springtime.

Who wouldn't get well in an environment of pure delight? Who wouldn't grow young and sportive? Who wouldn't discard conventional attire, and gambol through the woods, smocked or unsmocked, in order to be ready at all times to wade the delightful shallows, and plunge through the deep pools? The joys of life are spontaneous. They lose their first fresh flavor if they must wait on preparation. The poor mortal who couldn't imagine himself a faun, and sit on a mossed rock and play the Pipes of Pan in such a place, must be a born floor-walker.

These charms of nature had been feebly imitated in this Paris Kneippery by a shallow cement cistern in the center of the court which was formerly fed by a fountain connected with the city waterworks. The artificial forest consisted of several trees, and the health-giving meadows were represented by the grass that used to grow on the lawn around the cistern.

Here was the fountain where the water once flowed. Here was the court where the grass once "grewed." But the fountain was dry and rusty around the faucet, and if there was so much as a blade of grass in that whilom green expanse it was covered with a small square of bird's-eye linen, or other such material belonging to an infant's layette. Lines were stretched between the trees along which quaint little shirts, bind-

ers, slips and pinning blankets were strung in irregular, zigzag formation, which suggested the notes of a sand-man's song, and somehow reached down through the cobwebs of my subconsciousness and brought up nursery rhymes and rondelets that were stored there and forgotten many years ago. The rim of this wading cistern was decorated with diapers drying in the sunshine. To what lowly uses are the wonderful works of men sometimes reduced!

That place had a dual effect on me. There was such a contrast between its present and past activities—the contrast between fact and fiction; between genuine service and psychological flim-flam, a dangerously fascinating subject. No effort had been made to preserve the former atmosphere of this Kneipperry, but it was still as stimulating to my imagination as the blue haze of Napoleon's Tomb might be to some mute, inglorious militarist traveling all unrecognized with a company of Cook's tourists.

Hidden away from ridicule and criticism in the closed cabinets of our private consciousnesses we have vague, fantastic hopes and ambitions, doubts, fears, unanswered questions, riddles and enigmas, puzzles upon which we work in secret, and games of solitaire that we play and play, but never win. As a pet mania, witchcraft is a highly entertaining and inexhaustible theme. The world is well supplied with witches and wizards, mostly wizards, and whenever I cross the trail of a real "wiz" operating in the medical field, envy actuates me to stop and try to find out what system of hypnosis, or psychological suggestion is employed in the enterprise.



In the wash-house where the patients formerly stood over a floor drain while gentle showers fell upon them from the fountains above, women were washing baby linen without soap and using their knuckles for a washboard. Talk about the Song of the Shirt, or whatever it was that working women used to sweat over, well, French working women are still singing it while they wash the clothes of France with their unaided hands. A certain French writer of about a hundred years ago mentions women standing "in tubs" washing clothes. An American reader naturally mistakes this for a misprint and thinks it should read "at tubs"—but they are still standing "in tubs" in order to keep their feet dry, along all the streams in France, washing clothes in the cold water without soap. This may be the reason that so many old women are bent double. Perhaps they stand in these tubs leaning over the water for so many years, that the crook in their backs becomes fixed and permanent.

The American people are a clean people personally. They wear clean clothes washed with the help of machinery. But if the clothes in the United States had to be washed by our women without so much as a washboard or soap—I was going to say that we would change about once monthly instead of daily, but on second thought I believe we would invent paper clothes and throw them away after wearing.

The washtubs used at the Kneipperry were nothing less than Louis Quinze. Placed in the right shop they would bring a high price as antiques, in which tall palms might appropriately be planted and stood before some stately mansion with artistic effect. They

were rare old tubs, but altogether too massive and monumental in architecture for the average woman single-handed and alone to move from place to place and empty down those unique floor drains. There were doubtless many other interesting evidences of former activities about the place, but everything was draped in baby clothes and hidden from view.

Several years had passed since Kneipping had been practiced in that central court, but the thought of highly respectable and affluent citizens who had reached the age of discretion, and were conspicuous chiefly for pomp, circumstance and dignity of bearing, augmented by generous embonpoint, disporting themselves in that central wallow, and then coming out and ambling through the grass on all fours, sans raiment in foul or fair weather, seemed in retrospect to be conduct unbecoming a gentleman, which nothing less than the achievement of the highest possible degree of health and physical perfection could justify.

The president of the society sustaining and controlling these homes and creches was a charming type of French woman. She was taking tea at the House of the Good Neighbor and bubbling over with joy, which she expressed with her hands, eyes, and shoulders, supplemented by a few words in Anna Held English, because a great power for good, the American Red Cross, had answered her prayer and saved the home on the Boulevard Montparnasse, thereby insuring shelter and care to many unfortunate young women, during the next two years.

Her heart was overflowing with gratitude and she didn't know where to pour it out. It is hard to deal

directly with an impersonal power. She could not hang a wreath of immortelles on the Red Cross. She had sent flowers to the high officials who had approved her petition, but it was like putting flowers on a grave. No sign indicated that they had been received. Stifled, unexpressed emotion of this kind is painful, and in view of the fact that I had first reported the place, and was the only Red Cross woman available in the flesh, she poured out her gratitude to me.

But words were not sufficient. There should be a token—something for somebody to wear in order to commemorate this good service. La! what a pity madame, the doctor, had not served in the war zone and been exposed to danger—just a little danger that was quite safe, then it might be possible to secure a decoration, and American women are fond of decorations, *n'est-ce pas?*

Ah, well, here was her luck ring. It was more than a decoration. This talisman had been given her by an Arab when her husband was a young lieutenant stationed at Algiers. "Good luck and long life" was inscribed upon it in Arabian, and she took it off her finger and wished it on mine.

"Good luck and long life!" Perhaps it was a real luck ring. It almost seemed so. She had worn it eighteen years and those years had been kind to her. Luck she had in large measure, and a full, abundant life. She was well over forty, but she looked scarcely older than she must have been when the Arab gave her the talisman.

I was loth to take her luck ring, lest she lose her luck. She had worn it since her husband was a lieu-

tenant in Algiers. He was a general in France when she gave it to me, and her two sons had served since the beginning of the war, and she was not wearing a long, black veil. Her bright, cheerful appearance relieved the somber effect produced by the presence of so many women in mourning, which the general bereavement had gradually made the national costume.

The sparkling personality of this woman made our tea seem like a supper after the opera. This is a severe test. Anybody who can animate a five o'clock tea possesses a high order of genius. I had little to say. I was busy listening and looking. Her clothes fascinated me. They were just right. And nowadays the apparel far more often proclaims the woman than the man. A man has less latitude—less chance to give himself away. His conventional dress is an effective disguise. Men look so much alike that if they sit still and hold their tongues it is hard to find them out. But the apparel proclaims the woman instantly,

“And they in France of the best rank and station,  
Are of a most select and generous choice in that.”

I knew the price of simplicity in dress; the price of style; the price of Worth—what a name for a man who gets so much for nothing! His place on the Rue de la Paix had not been converted into a munition factory, but his war creations cost more than a machine gun. The nearest I was able to get to any of these was to the point of asking the price. And knowing the price my conscience disapproved of Worthy looking costumes during the war.

The president's gown suggested the Rue de la Paix and led me into temptation in spite of my patriotic principles in this respect. It was blue charmeuse with a dear little orange vest and a dainty white chiffon collar. She looked like a golden-breasted bluebird with a white ring around its neck, in a flock of ravens. And her hat—her hat was her crowning glory.

Her whole costume was a manifestation of wickedness and selfishness for which I felt conscientiously compelled to develop a fine feeling of disapproval, but the nearest I could get to it was furtive admiration and a sort of guilty prescience that I should duplicate her offense, especially the hat and gown, if the opportunity came within my reach. These conflicting sentiments must have shown in my face as I glanced surreptitiously at the effective ensemble in an effort to memorize the details. Where did she get that hat and gown, and what did she pay for them? This was the double question I dared not ask.

Most of our conversation had been about money and clothes. These are things we cannot get along very well without. We had talked through an interpreter about the cost of running the home for two years, and about clothes for the women, layettes for the babies, and bedding for the house. But the president's costume and the cost thereof was an impossible subject. Finally I developed the courage to ask the name of her modiste, and she smiled deprecatingly and answered: "I have no modiste. I make my gowns and my hats myself."

## CHAPTER VIII

### A FOUNTAIN OF LIFE

**BETWEEN** the pre-natal and post-natal homes in Paris stands the maternity hospital, particularly that time-honored establishment on the Boulevard Port Royal, through which the women who are cared for in these homes must pass. These institutions are maintained in all the large European cities. As practical schools of obstetrics they are of inestimable value to society, and a last refuge to thousands of women who have no other place to go for their confinements.

Every day, every night, everywhere in the delivery rooms—the torture chambers—of these great maternities, large numbers of women are expiating woman's first disobedience and bringing forth children in pain and sorrow. Who can measure the aggregate of agony that has been endured in these places? No effort is made to relieve pain unless some abnormal condition exists which calls for medical interference.

Money charges are not made for care in these hospitals, but that does not mean that the women do not pay. A wealth of maternity "material" is available at the great medical centers in Vienna, London, Berlin, Dublin, Paris and other cities, and students from all over the world flock to the places where "material" is plentiful and cheap, to study the art of midwifery. Here the midwives and nurses from the

training schools get their clinical experience for nothing which they afterward sell for money. Here the general practitioner from everywhere comes for "special courses" and tries his prentice hand, and the skilled obstetrician develops and tests his theories before using them on any of his private patients.

Exorbitant fees are often paid to distinguished accoucheurs. In wealthy families the honorarium thankfully bestowed upon the attending physician after the delivery of an heir to the house, not infrequently amounts to a small fortune. And who pays for this proficiency that brings so high a price in such quarters? The man of wealth who has collected the money from the world and his wife, in the usual indirect way, or the women whose tortured bodies are the source of the knowledge and skill worthy of so high a reward? It is merely a matter of the way one looks at this question, and there are people who never go into the delivery-room of a public maternity hospital, without feeling that the women in these "eleemosynary institutions" are paying the price of skilled care for all the mothers in the civilized world.

Surgical styles change from year to year like women's hats, and one perfectly wonderful operation after another, which may, in turn, have been all the rage, "falls into abatement and low price" and finally reaching its proper place as a surgical procedure, is performed by operators of good judgment and a high sense of human ethics, only in those cases where known results justify the risk involved, and where they themselves, were the circumstances reversed, would be willing to take the place of the patient.

A tidal wave of Cæsarian Section has just passed over the surgical world and is happily on the ebb. For a time it looked as though nature had made a mistake, but as a choice of evils the physiological process will probably not be entirely abandoned. Great things were formerly expected of the child who came in the manner of imperial Cæsar, but the experience has become so common that it is now regarded merely as an evidence that there was something wrong with his mother.

Such a child and his "deliverer" is no longer the chief subject of conversation among the women of a neighborhood. This is stale matter. But delightfully refreshing tales are told in different communities of certain little tadpoles who came blinking into the brilliant electric light of a surgery, just in time to escape excess of zeal and save their mothers from a section.

What a pity people do not come into the world equipped to receive and record impression! How interesting they would be! Fancy the first impressions of one of the aforementioned tadpoles. Out of the darkness he came, in the wee small hours of the morning, into the strong, white light of a surgery. The room was white, illuminated by electricity which seemed lighter than the glare of day. The furniture was white, the basins were white, even his mother in whom he instinctively had confidence and for whom he was about to begin snoozling around, was covered with a white sheet.

Strange creatures, disguised in white masks and long white robes, looking for all the world like a



corps of the Ku Klux Klan waiting to initiate a new member, glowered at him ghoulishly. He hadn't done anything, or said anything, and without the slightest provocation one of them seized him by the legs, and holding him upside down like a rabbit for sale in the market, slapped him viciously several times in rapid succession on his tender spanking-place, with the manifest approval of every person in the room, except the one who was under anesthesia and therefore unconscious of the great drama being enacted in which she was no less than the leading lady.

The spanking was an all too realistic foretaste of what the future had in store for him, but he set his gums resolutely together and uttered no sound. Thus foiled, the creatures adopted new tactics. The one who smoked an overcured, corn-cob pipe blew in his face repeatedly, adding insult to injury for the purpose of provoking retaliation, and goading him to his first fight in self-defense. But he turned the other cheek. The creatures were frustrated. The one who held him by the back of the neck and the buttocks lost his head completely and began working him to and fro as though he was an accordion from which a tune might be forced, and, failing, plunged him suddenly into a pan of cold water on which he yelled lustily for help, and his mother woke up and told them to let him alone.

There was another side to this situation which no tadpole however precocious could possibly appreciate. There had been a movement in that room, a faint, indefinite flutter, and a suppressed chuckle not emitted

by that infant or his mother. The physician-in-chief looked around smilingly to see who else was smiling and mark the offenders for future punishment. But they were not so easily caught. The poise of every assistant was perfect. Perfection is sometimes a fault. Even the face of his brother practitioner and competitor in their chosen field, who had been invited that he might witness the realization of a high hope, a triumph in modern and ancient surgery, and the incidental inflation of the "bubble reputation," wore the noncommittal expression of a plain, white dinner plate. Every adult person in that room was affirmatively innocent. Not one of them had chuckled. Oh, no! It must have been Puck and the Stork, a sleazy, irresponsible pair, who escaped through the transom, leaving the echo of that suppressed chuckle in the corridors of the hospital where it lingered for many a day.

The question was, who pays for proficiency in the field of obstetrics, and I was about to cite a pertinent case, when this tidal wave of Cæsarian Section carried me off the course. Several years ago I attended a clinic in a city in central Europe where a woman was delivered of a child by this method, in the presence of a large class made up principally of American physicians who were paying well for the clinical advantages and instruction they were receiving. The operator spoke good English and lectured on this interesting subject while he worked. The patient, he said, had contracted and deformed pelvic bones, due to rickets in childhood from lack of proper food. It was impossible for her to bear a child in the normal

way—and this was the fourth Cæsarian Section he had performed upon her.

She was very poor. She was not seeking an heir for her wretchedness. She could not support a child, and if any survived they must inevitably have become wards of the government and subjects for the children's clinic. There was a woman present who was interested in humanity as well as science, and she was shocked into asking the eminent professor in the presence of his admiring colleagues, why he had not sterilized the poor creature the first time, and saved her from this danger and suffering. This was a straight question and it got a straight answer. "*She is a good case for my class,*" he replied with unconscious cruelty. "*She comes into my clinic every year.*"

It was not a matter of ethics, and he did not pretend that it was. It was merely a matter of good "material" for his clinic. He was an excellent operator, a gifted teacher, and his honesty was admirable. For most men engaged in hellish work, claim Heaven as an ally.

That woman did not write any checks to cover the cost of those Cæsarian Sections. She did not have any money. She was lucky if she got a real dinner on Christmas and was alive to eat it. But she paid a price so great that it cannot be put into words. And what did she pay for? Not for herself or her child, but for the safety of other mothers and their children in distant parts of the world. No doubt she was grateful to the wonderful professor who had saved her life so many times, but perhaps some day she will realize that she and her Cæsarian-born babies were merely

“material”—that they were of those who suffer and die that others may be saved. And if the people blinded and distracted by affliction ever set up a guillotine in that city, and she does not sit in the square and knit a record of the heads into her sock as they fall, then God has blessed her with a Christlike, forgiving spirit.

There were about twenty beds in the delivery ward of the *Maternité* on the Boulevard Port Royal, and the continuous activity in this reception-room might easily have led a casual observer into the error of believing that the national anxiety regarding the birth-rate was due to the surplus population with which the country was being flooded from this particular fountain of life. Patients were not admitted to this room until they were in active travail, and the moans of so many women, the maternal cries characteristic of the different stages of parturition, mingled and alternated through the night, producing a weird, never-ending antiphony of pain.

This port of entry is never closed. A continuous procession of the native born, direct from no man's land, has been passing through into France for over a hundred years. Many war babies have been delivered at this maternity hospital. Not only those of 1914–1919, but the war babies for over a century, including the Napoleonic issue, and those born during the inhuman siege of 1871. The chances are that wee Cosette came in by this gate, and a large proportion of the little Gavroches that have infested the banks of the Seine for generations arrived by this route.

Here is the midwife in all her glory. The *Sage Femme* (wise woman) as she is called in France—and sometimes she is a wise woman. The mother of Socrates was a *Sage Femme*—a wise woman. Perhaps that had something to do with the wisdom of her son. Valuable literary contributions on the subject of obstetrics have been made by some of these women.

Marie Bourgeois, the midwife of Marie de Medici, wrote a delectable treatise on the subject of midwifery for the use of her daughter and other midwives in the practice of their profession. Only a few copies of this book are extant. There is one in the United States and it is held so precious that it is not allowed to leave the library. It is a rare volume replete with valuable instruction, practical philosophy and good advice. With a mother's earnestness and a specialist's pride, she exhorts her daughter to devotion to her high calling, emphasizing the importance of personal worthiness, and sounding a solemn warning against the moral and professional danger of the incoming male midwife.

This shameful innovation menaced the modesty of woman, and jeopardized the professional standing of all natural-born, heaven-appointed midwives of the rightful gender. There was no foretelling where this breach of the decencies might lead, and with all the fervency of a practitioner in possession of a rich field, she called upon the righteous, recognized, and perfectly ethical female midwives, to stand together and resist this assault upon the established order in the practice of midwifery.

How could a man be a midwife? This was self-evidently impossible. The idea was an offense against nature and morality. Man was not made for that vocation. He was either no midwife or no man. Out upon the unmannered perverts who would profane a lady's chamber with their presence at such a time. She had barely escaped an unpleasant encounter with one of them, and the circumstances of this near-calamity are related with intense feeling. The patient was a princess of the blood. The case was an obstinate breach, and against her protests an infamous man-midwife had been sent for post haste. But with the help of God and a strong right arm, she delivered the contrary infant before the "pest" arrived, thereby saving her own honor and the life of her royal patient.

The fears of this far-seeing feminist were not without foundation, for in less than two hundred years the man midwife had become so firmly entrenched that he was actually writing just such screeds against the incoming "hen-medic." The spirit of these comparatively recent protests was about the same as that which moved the royal midwife, but the language was far less piquant and picturesque.

Marie Bourgeois was a woman of good sense and high ambition. She evidently hoped that the mantle of Royal Midwife which she had worn so worthily might fall upon the shoulders of her daughter. In the train of Marie de Medici there was the Keeper of the Royal Robes, the Holder of the Royal Mitten, the Mistress of the Hair-brushes and Fine-toothed Combs, and other small fry with exalted titles, privileges and emoluments hanging about the court and batten-

upon the country. The law of supply and demand was holding in chrysalis the pornophoric variety of moths that were usually to be found fluttering around the high lights fulfilling their destinies by singeing their wings, for the King was under age, and to his mother a caterpillar was a caterpillar, and she preferred the insect in its crawling form. All the soft billets were naturally filled with these larvæ just as they are at the present day and age, but the position of Royal Midwife was a real job—the most important appointment in the Kingdom. She attended the women of the reigning family in their confinements, and there undoubtedly were times when the fate of the nation depended upon her judgment, skill and loyalty. The tender life of the future king was delivered directly into her hands. It sometimes hung by a thread, and in these cases the succession itself was determined by the Royal Midwife.

There were two outstanding personages in the retinue of Marie de Medici: Marie Bourgeois, the Royal Midwife, and Richelieu, the secretary of state. These two spoke for themselves. They had neither time nor disposition to curry favor with the court chroniclers. They were busy. Here is where sagacity met sagacity, and it is not at all unlikely that that wise man and wise woman played effectually into each other's hands.

The *Sage Femme* in France to-day works in perfect harmony with the members of the medical profession. Indeed, she is an important part of this profession. She is trained in obstetrical schools and hospitals, and the requirements for admission to these institutions

are rising gradually. The practice of midwifery is almost entirely in the hands of these women, and the death rates are not higher than they are elsewhere. What they lack in skill they probably make up in patience. They are hired by the week, and there is no incentive to rush a case in order to get away to another. The possibilities for damage are lessened by the fact that they are not permitted to use obstetrical forceps to hasten a delivery, and they do not attend contagious diseases and are less likely on this account to be carriers of infection.

The *Sage Femme* is popular with the French people. She will probably never be replaced but will gradually evolve into the French woman physician, just as the "leech" and barber of times gone by evolved into the modern physician and surgeon. The midwives have not so far to go. Many of them are highly qualified already. The woman physician is merely a step forward and upward, and the confidence the French people have in their midwives will help rather than hinder the process.

The night at the maternity had been a profitable one to France, to the student midwives, to the mothers it is to be hoped, and certainly to the two nurses and myself from the House of the Good Neighbor. The work had all been done by women. There was not a man in the delivery ward. There were no medical students in search of "material"; no doctors from foreign countries examining one poor sufferer after another, with not so much as by your leave. France had called her men. There was a man's job for every one of them, and very few were to be found sitting in the



anterooms of childbirth chambers waiting to tie an umbilical cord. Practically the only men still occupying women's jobs were those incapacitated by age or infirmity.

There had been a large number of cases, and several very interesting ones. The women in attendance had been instructed by the best obstetricians in France, and they were doing their work in accordance with the methods taught and practiced in the country. This fountain of maternity information was drawn upon from time to time by the nurses from the House of the Good Neighbor, and the night's experience had added materially to our professional stock. This valuable acquisition was easy to carry away. It did not need to be viséd, and in the future it could be given to the poor or sold to the rich according to our inclinations and opportunities.

An identification tag was attached to the wrist of each newcomer immediately on his arrival in order to prevent his being lost in the crowd during the initial ceremony of ablution, and returned to the wrong mother. People are so fussy and unreasonable about these things. In this respect we are ruled by instincts like the lower animals. The normal hen will have no chicken but one she has hatched herself, unless she can be deceived into accepting a poor little fluffy waif. The other animals have the same instincts, and a normal woman would rather have her own baby with a club foot than the production of another woman registered a hundred per cent. plus by the Better Babies' Association. As a concession to this universal sentiment, great care was taken to insure the return of each

child to its own mother, but accidents occur in the best regulated hospitals.

To err is human among nurses, midwives, and even doctors, as well as among professional delivery-men, and everybody knows that in spite of the greatest precautions, trunks and packages all too often go to the wrong houses. Many thrilling stories have been written about the exchange of infants, but most of these tales are untold. And the only absolutely safe way in a crowded maternity hospital is for a mother never to let her baby out of her sight unless it has a hare-lip, or some other positive mark of identification.

This reminds me of the night revels in a central European maternity hospital where I served some years ago. The place was a regular humanity mill. During rush hours a large number of infants accumulated on the table in the center of the delivery ward, where they were afterward weighed, measured and put through the first degree. They were all wrapped in hospital swaddling clothes and looked as much alike as a line of infant mummies.

That table, and the nightly grist of the proletariat deposited thereon, was a constant source of speculation to me. Its potentialities were fascinating. There was always the possibility of a Spartacus, but absolutely no way of recognizing him if he should come. The chances of that table were not lost on the poor mothers, who did not dare say their souls were their own, and a glance down the ward would often show them lifted on their elbows anxiously watching with wistful mother-eyes the wee little bits of humanity for which they had paid so high a price.

On one occasion I tried to suggest tactfully to the physician in charge of the ward, that there was danger of the babies getting mixed, and in a casual, matter-of-fact manner he replied that they probably were exchanged at times, but with so many to look after this accident was inevitable, and it was of little consequence anyhow, because they all belonged to the same class.

During the earlier midnight hours it seemed as though these little "tenderfeet" had heard the call of France and were striving to beat each other into the country. But the minute they arrived each and every one of them had registered his disappointment, and loud cries to heaven had been raised from different parts of the room inevitably suggesting that "man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward." The boys yelled the loudest. They always do, and they should be given credit for their spirit of protest. It moves the world.

Toward morning there was a lull. The moaning of the mothers was low in the ward. The cases were all first stage, and nothing of special interest would occur for several hours. Some of the infants had been taken away, and the wails of those remaining had subsided. They had seemingly accepted their first defeat. The head midwife was writing the records of the night, and others were snatching a wink of sleep. There was a long wait ahead, and I casually expressed what I thought was a futile desire to go home.

Both the nurses from the House of the Good Neighbor had evidently been entertaining the same thought, and the one who had been lame all her life promptly

seconded my suggestion, adding that it would not take much more than two hours, and that would be better than waiting until traffic was resumed in the city.

At about two o'clock in the morning we set out to walk from the opposite side of Paris to Levallois-Perret, a distance of approximately six miles. The streets were dimly lighted and the landmarks fog-shrouded, but those girls knew the way, and before we had covered many kilometers I realized why the chief of our visiting nurses was so ambitious to have a bicycle for the use of the dispensary. There were no taxicabs to be had at that hour, besides the women who lived at the House of the Good Neighbor were very conscientious regarding the use of gasoline, and when it was necessary to go anywhere they naturally started out in the good old primitive way on their feet.

Straight toward the heart of Paris we trudged, wasting but little breath on words as we went. Those French nurses looked neither to the right nor the left. They had a fixed objective and they were going toward it without deviating from a direct line. French women had long since given up hope of help in petty undertakings, and had learned to conserve every unit of physical energy for the task ahead. But American women do not walk very much. Peace or war, France, England or Italy, somehow they manage to ride. I hadn't the slightest intention of walking to Levallois-Perret if anything on wheels appeared in the street, that could be bribed, pressed or cajoled into service.

I had kept a sharp lookout through the fog, momentarily expecting something to turn up, but we had not

noting his number, 539, in order that we might recognize him in the future. This admiration was manifestly mutual. He smiled upon us in a most friendly way and then joined casually in the conversation. He did not say anything startling, but the familiar idiom of his English constrained me to ask where he had acquired it, and I was not surprised to learn that he had spent five years on the Yukon in the early Dawson days.

The world is small, and there is luck in odd numbers, may be trite expressions, but on that occasion they seemed true. That good old Klondiker on a Paris taxicab shortened our distance about three miles, and put us down near the Porte de Champerret. This was not more than two kilometers from the House of the Good Neighbor, which we reached before the break of day after a night's experience that had added to our worth in the world, and cost us exactly nothing.

## CHAPTER IX

### CHILD SALVAGE

OUR Uncle Sam played the big brother to the children of France during the war. It is safe to say that every community from the Atlantic to the Pacific contributed to their support in one way or another. Children were starving in all parts of Europe, but the cry of the French child reached the heart of America. Business men subscribed liberally, women's clubs voted their quotas, school-children gave their pennies, organizations and individuals became sponsors for the Fatherless Children of France, and many a sorry bachelor, looking out of his club window as the sons of other men marched by under the Stars and Stripes, saw himself for the first time as others always see him, and realizing that his scant, gray hair was without honor, straightway adopted a French orphan, that he might have a youngster to call his own, even if it were a proxy child of a foreign land and language.

Children were adopted by our soldiers in France. The plan usually followed was for companies, detachments, groups or individuals, to select an orphan and guarantee its support for a year by contributing five hundred francs. Photographs of candidates for adoption were frequently submitted, and one company finding it impossible to make a selection from the pictures

of a family of five children, finally sent word that it would adopt "the whole darn family."

This god-parent scheme proved a great impetus to the study of the English language. The guardians of these orphans saw at once how important it was for them to be able to communicate with their benefactors, and many interesting letters have been written by these little tikes, with the help of their teachers, perhaps, to their paternal regiments, and their more personal god-parents across the sea. Here is one of the company communications:

*"My dear Godfathers:*

"I send you this letter to tell you how I am. Well, I am well, and I hope you are the same. I must thank you once more for your kindness. Mother bought a nice pair of shoes for me and I keep them for Sundays, and wear the old Sunday ones every day, so that I always have nice boots on, owing to you. Mother says that she will buy all that is necessary for us every month, and we are having much nicer food. My dear Godfathers I wish I could know you; perhaps I shall have that pleasure some day. In the meantime am always thinking about you and talking about you with mother. My little brother and sister and I earnestly wish that no harm may come to you on the front, and that you may be victorious and drive away the wicked Boches, who are spoiling our country. Mother wants me to say that she is very grateful to you, and I send you, dear Godfathers, my fondest kisses."

Not all of these new relationships were so distant and impersonal. Some strong attachments were formed. Engrossed in the affairs of life a man may forget, but the love of a little child is very enduring. No matter what changes come as the years go by, there

is one person his gratitude always remembers, and that is the man who gave him a nice pair of boots when he was six years old.

The war is over and most of the American soldiers have returned. Their home attachments will quickly efface the memories of friendly associations that relieved the loneliness overseas. But so long as the present generation of childhood lasts, there will be children in France looking wistfully over the water, wondering where their godfathers are, and if they will ever return. After peace is established our common interest in life on the other side will naturally wane, and many an adoptee who has been the source of an unearned income to a family, and who has enjoyed special privileges on that account, will find himself of no more importance than a common child.

A great many Americans have wanted to bring their adopted children home with them, but France will not allow these little ones to be taken out of the country. This ruling is doubtless good for the nation, but hard on individuals in some instances. One devoted youngster, who had evidently read thrilling tales of the sea, and who did not intend to permit a little thing like a national law to interfere with the divine right of self-determination, bade his godfather a fond farewell, after which he managed to get aboard the ship and stow away behind somebody's state-room trunk. When the ship was in mid-ocean he emerged from his hiding place looking wan and sea-sick, but with the glory of triumphant love shining in his eyes.

The American Red Cross took an active part in the different branches of child welfare work. This or-

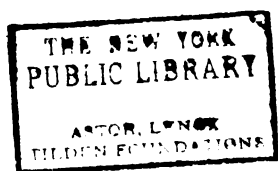


ganization coöperated with many of the French societies, helping to finance their plans, and directly and indirectly caring for thousands of children. Hospitals were operated, dispensaries established, nurseries and homes financed, and an educational campaign was conducted that reached every part of France.

The Child Welfare Expositions were the most distinctively American phases of this work, and the public interest aroused in health matters cannot fail to be of permanent value to France. The Traveling Exposition was an effective forerunner of these notable affairs afterward staged in the different cities.

The health camionette with its traveling company of hygienists going through the country and stopping at certain towns, attracted as much attention as the van of a circus with the pictures of the animals painted on the outside. Wherever it stopped to give an exhibition crowds gathered to gratify curiosity, and stayed to get information on a vital subject presented in an entertaining way. The literature and posters were striking, whimsical and inoffensively instructive. There were short talks and long interesting films with good health morals, showing innocent children infected with disease by unhygienic habits, and others saved by the observance of simple sanitary rules.

Our national genius for advertising found a virgin field in this connection—a new world to conquer that would have delighted the ingenuous soul of an honest-to-goodness ad-man. Of course it was not called advertising. *Æsculapius* forbend! Business men advertise with a commercial motive, but physicians and





### **THE AMERICAN WOMAN PHYSICIAN**

**Dr. Margaret Farwell, center of this group, was decorated by the French government**



### **SALVAGE**

welfare workers develop a public psychology for the purpose of making people believe they want things that are good for them. The distinguished difference is in the motive. That camionette worked wonders. It actually made people believe that they wanted fresh air to breathe and pure water to drink.

This is incredible but true. France has an abundant supply of fresh air and good water, free and to be had for nothing. The water is used for fountains, canals, and other artistic, commercial, domestic, and agricultural purposes, but since the passing of windmills and sailing ships there has been little use for the fresh air.

The opening of the Child Welfare Expositions in big cities were important social functions in which the high officials of Church, State, Labor, and representatives of other phases of national life participated. The attendance ran into the hundreds of thousands and the public interest in the different exhibits increased from day to day. At the City of Lyons large playgrounds were established near the entrance of the exposition and groups of boys and girls were taught American games which develop leadership, team-play, initiative and coöperation. The enthusiasm created by these games was augmented by the use of stereopticons showing lantern slides, and stereophotographic presentations of colored views of recreational work in America.

The examination of infants attracted the mothers, and the dental clinics where many children had the luck to get their teeth cleaned and repaired demonstrated without words why the American soldiers had

such good teeth. The theme, the motif, of these expositions was good health, and consequent long life. Even the Punch and Judy shows that seemed equally amusing to the old and the young, had a vital public health aspect that nobody overlooked.

This campaign was launched in the old City of Chartres with appropriate ceremony. France delights in ceremony. It is a gracious heritage. In art, business, politics or welfare work, the Land of the Fleur-de-lis appreciates the value of an impressive approach. In personal and public matters the courtesies of life were not disregarded even in war time. Half the joy of an undertaking may be the outcome of a felicitous beginning, and the ultimate success of an enterprise may hinge wholly upon the helpful spirit engendered by the exchange of compliments, and the public expressions of good will with which it is inaugurated.

A special train left Paris at eight o'clock in the morning with French officials, and a large number of Red Cross workers who were interested in this project, and also in the fourteenth century cathedral and other sights in the old City of Chartres. Whenever it was possible to get two birds with one stone the opportunity was not overlooked by the average American in civil service on the other side.

I had the luck to miss that train and to meet a belated little French girl from the Red Cross Headquarters, who was looking down the track disconsolately and bemoaning a similar fate. We had our tickets and our passes. There was only one thing to do. The regular train was just leaving and we squeezed

into the nearest coach, regardless of the protests of the conductor, or the smiling welcome of the poilus with which it was crowded to the guards.

There were no seats in that car. It was built with standing-room only, and was so tightly packed with humanity that it seemed impossible to force another human unit through the door. But the poilus were hospitable. They contracted their persons, stretched upward a trifle and the feat was accomplished.

That ride was worth more than a snap-shot of the Chartres Cathedral in the morning sun. In three hours' time I got a slight idea of what it must mean to men to stand on their feet in that way and ride from the north to the south of France. Packed in with poilus, I was able to appreciate the comfort I had missed in that special train ahead. What luck! If we had caught that train, I should have been sitting on a velvet cushion not so much as asking myself what I had done to earn the privilege. But standing cheek by jowl with the men who ride in cattle-cars and sharing their discomfort, I realized the value of a seat, and found unworthy consolation in the paradoxical fact that my personal friends who were riding *de luxe* in the special train ahead were unconscious of their blessings, and therefore not actually enjoying the benefit bestowed upon them by an unfair Providence.

It was cold outside and there was no means of warming our car, but nobody complained. Those poilus created a lot of heat. They were physiological radiators and taken all together emitted about as much steam as a French locomotive. This clouded the windows and made it impossible to see through them, but

there was nothing on the outside, anyhow, half so interesting as the company within.

Those soldiers had seen three or four years of service. They were used to killing people, and yet they were such mild mannered men. There was every reason for protest, but they did not murmur. They had the strength to take possession of the first class carriages and ride like human beings, but it probably did not occur to them. Their forbearance was amazing. They stood like lambs without so much as a bleat. Perhaps they were going home on furlough. At any rate they were happy, smiling, and their attitude indicated a high degree of satisfaction. Some of them were tired and went to sleep on their feet without any danger of falling, and they did not so much as raise their weary heads when the train stopped at Chartres.

Two thousand people had assembled in the theater and many had been turned away. Our high and mighty brothers, French and American, sat on the platform looking very serious and not altogether at ease. Considering the importance of the occasion they deported themselves with becoming modesty, especially the Americans. Let us not claim undue credit for this; it was probably due to a very general lack of language. But one of our representative countrymen delivered an address in French and we all felt proud of him. We gloried in his courage. We were not qualified to criticize his French, but we had faith in his intentions. His French confrères, who were probably sponsored by the Sorbonne, nodded their heads automatically. This increased our confidence in his

performance, although we were uncertain whether these signs indicated comprehension and approval of what he was saying, or were merely a national expression of politeness to a distinguished foreigner. In either case his speech had one high merit which we all understood and appreciated. It was brief.

There were protracted speeches by distinguished Frenchmen, which were doubtless well worth hearing, but it was clear that the audience was chiefly interested in the picture show, and the large crowd of Americans present. On the completion of the program we visited the old cathedral, the towered gate, and the picturesque mill-race which cuts through the center of the town. Many of the Red Cross people remained in Chartres over night, but some of us took the evening train for Paris, reaching there just in time to catch the last subway, the chief and most reliable means of traffic within the city walls.

Unfortunately, my sense of direction underground runs contrary to all reality, and I naturally rushed into the last train going the wrong way, and did not notice the mistake until several miles had been added to the distance from home. This error was partially corrected by transferring to a train running back toward the center of Paris, and from there I walked to Levallois.

Several taxicabs passed, but I knew my way home, and I had had too much experience with taxicab drivers in the day time to take any chances with a strange one at that hour of night. As a choice of evils, a long walk was less hazardous. There was nothing unusual in the appearance of a woman groping through the



dark streets, and so long as I held my tongue no one would be likely to take the slightest notice.

Within fifteen minutes of the time the metropolitan stopped running the streets were deserted. Silence gradually supervened. Paris went to bed. The night was too quiet. It got on my nerves. There is no stillness like the stillness of a sleeping city, and no darkness like the darkness of an unlighted street. The stilly midnight hours belong to the heart of a metropolis. There are no friendly night sounds, no woodsy smells to soothe the soul, no lights or shades, except the dense shadow of the buildings rising sheer from the ground and creating a dark cañon with caves on either side.

Here the lineal descendants of the original cave men have perfected the first housing plan. Here they live and breathe and have their congested being. Phew! What effluvia! When the eyes and ears are incapacitated by darkness and silence, the nose takes on a high protective function, and the sense of smell becomes a guiding instinct. The air was dank and heavy with an odor strongly suggesting a well populated zoological garden, but I knew there were no bear dens in that section of the city. Community life among men and animals have certain characteristics in common, and it was man, gregarious man, my own species en masse, and never again will I sniff at helpless animals held in captivity.

No wonder Paris produces and uses so much perfume. She needs it. No wonder her poets sing of violets and the sweetness of the spring's wild flowers. Even I, pussy-footing along in the middle of the street,

lest some rapacious cave creature reach out his hairy paw from one of those dark caverns, turned my nose from one reeking gutter to the other, held my breath while passing the gas belching sewer-traps along the way, and carefully keeping a true course toward the House of the Good Neighbor, lost my fancy in the "continuous woods where rolls the Oregon," and sweet wild currants bloom in May.

There was nothing startling about this after midnight tramp except the startling statues here and there along the route. Mythical and military statues in menacing poses are all very well for broad daylight in piping times of peace. But when a naturally timid person gliding fearsomely through the dark streets of a strange city in a warring land, silently turns a corner and is suddenly confronted by "Perseus" with uplifted dagger, or some other bronze immortal as easily mistaken for a present day apache, or a Hun, the experience is disquieting.

My last and least fear was the guard at the gate. My knowledge of French was scarcely sufficient to explain why I was passing from one city to another at that untimely hour. The guard was in his niche, and far be it from me to accuse him of dozing on duty. I did not wait to see. The rubber heels which had muted and comforted the miles, carried me through the city gate without so much as by your leave.

It was darker still in Levallois, but the cañons were not so deep, and encouraging signs of life gladdened my listening ears. The silence was broken by the hum of the factories, but not so much as a gleam of light betrayed their positions. It was almost a mile

to a rough garden wall, and at this point I turned three blocks to the left, crossed the street, and fifty feet to the right brought me to the House of the Good Neighbor.

Night calls for help were of frequent occurrence, and I expected to creep in without the knowledge of anybody except my friend, the maid. But there must have been something wrong with my knock, for Made-moiselle Bassot, herself, with a candle held above her head, looked down the stairs and caught me in the act. A moment later she came to my room manifestly expecting an explanation. The explanation was unsatisfactory. Instead of praising my prowess she questioned my judgment, pointing out dangers that I knew not of, and finally left me with a lot of good advice for the future and a hot water bag for my feet.

## CHAPTER X

### THE CHRISTENING OF A CRECHE

IN anticipation of the French law requiring manufacturers to provide creches (nurseries) for the young children of their women employees, a group of munition makers in Levallois-Perret and Neuilly had co-operated in the construction and equipment of a model creche and the christening of this new institution was an event of social and national importance. Mademoiselle Girault, chief of the visiting nurses, represented the House of the Good Neighbor at this function, and I got in on an official invitation sent to the American Red Cross.

Everybody was not there. The capacity of that beautiful baby house was limited and only those who were requested to come were admitted. M. Loucheur, *ministre de l'Armement*, was master of ceremonies, and Senators Strauss and Thomas, M. Lagage, mayor of Levallois-Perret, and several others participated in the program.

The manufacturers were there in force and a strong looking group of men they were. There is something distinctive about the business men of the world; something they have in common; a cosmopolitan air perhaps, and to a casual observer these alert appearing munition makers might easily have passed for a committee of Rotarians from any big city in the United

States. But it certainly would be hard to imagine the leading business men of our nation and the representatives of our national government participating in a ceremony incident to the opening of a nursery.

A prominent munition maker, who promoted the *creche* and raised the funds for its construction, spoke for his associates who had joined in financing this innovation in the interest of women and children. The place had cost a mint of money, and its sponsors seemed proud of having anticipated and surpassed the requirements of the government. The knowledge that their competitors would be obliged to follow their lead may have been an additional source of satisfaction. The speaker was not an orator—but words from him were superfluous. He did not need to speak. “By their fruits ye shall know them” and that place spoke eloquently for the manufacturers of Levallois-Perret.

Senator Albert Thomas, who was closely identified with the development and coördination of the munition manufactories of France, was the principal speaker. Mademoiselle Girault said he was a unified socialist. This was interesting, but it was not so easy for me to elicit exact information regarding the political peculiarities of a unified socialist. She spoke very little English and I spoke very little French, but in spite of this disadvantage we were usually able to exchange ideas, and unless I misinterpreted the signs and sounds employed to convey this information, a unified socialist is a stand-pat, straight-ticket socialist—anyhow, Albert Thomas is one, and this fact speaks well for the party.

That unified socialist has the gift of tongues—a divine gift that transcends the limitations of human language. The Americans caught the gist of his speech on the needs of the nation, and wept in spirit because they could not understand it all. Grouped together in the outer darkness, intent on every suggestive sound, and every scintillating gleam of light, we sympathized with each other and tormented Mademoiselle Girault for interpretations—as though Albert Thomas could pass through an interpreter without losing his identity. We felt so helpless; so deaf, dumb and blind, that we resolved to acquire French and to do so without further loss of time.

Christenings are fascinating ceremonies. They are as old as funerals, but they seem as new as the dawn of day. A christening is a great event. It is a public acknowledgment of existence; the official launching of a new individual, entity or enterprise with a title all its own under which it immediately begins to establish relationships. The future waits upon these formal rites presenting vistas of infinite variety.

I once stood sponsor for a helpless infant and was prepared to be father and mother to that child. But when the officiating clergyman turned to me suddenly and demanded: "Dost thou in the name of this child renounce the devil and all his works?" I hesitated. There sat the friend of my soul with a twinkle in her eye and an impish quiver at the corners of her mouth. I looked at the infant. It was a puckered up, unpromising appearing mite, but it had all the charm and mystery of an acorn from which a mighty oak might grow.

My choice was made instantly. Casting a sad, abnegating glance into the eyes of my fair friend, I answered resolutely, "I will."

Christenings are rich in reminiscences. They bristle with anecdote, but never in any part of the world had I witnessed a ceremony of this kind that presented as many interesting phases as that novel affair at Levallois-Perret.

This creche was christened with large quantities of champagne. It was a full and remarkable day, unique in many respects, and manifestly exhilarating to at least one American who had come from extra dry territory. A glance in his direction and we sought out the water faucet at the risk of creating comment. No matter what we did we were sure of quiet, kindly criticism. If we drank water when wine of the finest vintage was offered in hospitality they would think it strange and almost unappreciative. And if we drank wine and exhibited the usual signs and symptoms, their disapproval would show plainly in their faces.

As a people we seem so strong physically that the French wonder at our weakness in this respect, our unstable equilibrium that can be so easily upset. And they seem so frail, comparatively, that we wonder at their strength. They cannot all afford wine, and in preference to water they drink an acetic acid combination made from sour apples and mother of vinegar that would destroy a native American by corroding his internal machinery with verdigris.

The plans and specifications of this unique building had been perfected by Doctor LaSage, who led the admiring throng through the three pavilions, consist-

ing of about thirty rooms, explaining the various features designed for the comfort and well-being of the infants who may have the luck to be placed in that institution, instead of in one of the makeshift day nurseries of the district.

Baby life was expressed in the construction of this creche. The architecture and decorations did not so much as suggest the existence of mature man, and the fittings and furnishings were made particularly for baby use. Doctor LaSage was a physician, an artist, and a far-seeing man, but he could not see quite far enough. Knowing the impossibility of finding a French woman who could be trusted to open the windows and let in a current of air, he had taken the precaution to have all the glass panes for that *creche* specially cast with polka-dot perforations about two inches apart, and looking into the future it is easy to see those remarkable windows with little pledgets of cotton stuck in every hole.

That beautiful baby house equipped for the use of 150 infants could not be conveniently adapted to the entertainment of 200 grown people. We seemed like a horde of giants in a lilliputian environment. The place was amply furnished, but we stood against the walls for the reason that there was nothing adequate to sit on. There were plenty of chairs, tables, settees and couches, but they were made for little folks. The only provision for grown people was for the attendants that the *creche* would require.

The building consisted of three long, low pavilions built on the edge of the square practically surrounding the central court, where there were overflowing



sand-bins, buckets, shovels and all the necessary implements for raising pyramids and other structures of equal importance.

This *creche* was so lovely that we could not help contrasting it with others we visited at times. All kinds and conditions of baby homes, private and public had sprung up in France since the women of the country, including the mothers of little children, had rallied to the defense of the nation and were serving eleven hours a day in munition factories. Those who were disqualified by age or other infirmity for government service were often intrusted with the most important government service—the care of children.

Some of these *creches* adapted from old shops, and other ground-floor, back-alley tenements, were squalid cribs. Here the shortage of fuel was felt—the fuel that was consumed in large quantities in fashionable hotels for the comfort of strong people. Few of these rooms had been thoroughly dried out and aired for over three years. They were cold, damp, dark and without proper plumbing. The walls were sweaty and mildewed and the windows were rarely opened.

Into these places the mothers who served in the munition factories brought their babies before the break of day, and called for them twelve hours later when the night had come. These children were rest-broken and fretful, and their exhausted mothers carried them to cold homes, cared for them during the night and brought them back in the morning. Motherhood is the fundamental military service, and these women were doing double duty for France. They belonged to the battalion of Life and Death. Life to



THE CRECHE DWELLERS

THE NEW YORK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX,  
TILDEN FOUNDATION

their country and death to its enemies. They had not won the Croix de Guerre to wear upon their breasts, but they had carried the Cross of War for over three years and it was stamped on their bodies and souls.

During the last two years of the war these conditions gradually improved as a result of an effort to conserve child life. There seemed to be a national awakening. The reaction was pronounced. Laws were passed compelling manufacturers to install *creches* where working mothers could nurse their babies at proper intervals. In some instances the extravagant plans for the care of infants of women who had hitherto been deprived of the necessities of life, indicated that the pendulum was swinging from the point of poverty and its attendant dangers, far beyond the center of comfort and safety.

In one of the big factories that had anticipated the *creche* law, we met an employer who had developed a paternal pride in his family of sixty infants. Nothing was left undone that might add to their comfort and welfare. The nurses were required to have their finger-nails carefully manicured so they could bathe these precious babies without danger of scratching their tender skins.

This man had a hobby-horse worth riding. He knew just how much his babies ought to gain each week. He watched their records as though they were baseball scores, and if they did not make their averages somebody had to explain. From wretched mites of skin and bone they had grown roly-poly and rosy in their healthful quarters. They had developed dimples in their knees, and one of them had a tooth. All

of those over three months old knew him for a friend, and whenever he came into the *creche* they cooed and smiled up into his face as though they were grateful because he had not taken their mother's milk from them and turned it into money.

Responsible fatherhood is the highest purely human development, and those little babies were developing a high type of human being. That munition maker had found the blue bird of happiness in his own factory. He had made a wonderful discovery. He did not need to leave this world in order to get to heaven. The Kingdom of Heaven on earth is the kingdom of little children, and he had created a heaven for himself. He had come to believe that those babies were a blessing to the whole plant. He was so fond of them that he was beginning to dread the passing of their infancy, and in order to prevent the necessity of their moving away to a less salubrious place he was planning a nursery with playgrounds for older children.

## CHAPTER XI

### WAR WIDOWS

ONCE a month there was a special reception for War Widows at the House of the Good Neighbor. From one to two hundred usually attended. It is not hard to remember their costumes. They were all in black, and they all wore long crêpe veils. A distinctive atmosphere prevailed on these occasions, but it was not an atmosphere of gloom. A hundred and fifty young women in widows' weeds certainly did suggest bereavement, but there was a glory in their grief that lifted them above the common reactions of humanity. A war orphan is like any other orphan, but a young war widow wears a crown of love and glory forever.

One of our visiting nurses was a war widow, and through her I saw the compensation in the sacrifice involved. Three years had passed since her young husband had won immortal life at Verdun, and she had aged, but he was still twenty-five. Time can never touch him. Though she live a hundred years, and fade and stoop and wither away, he will be just twenty-five, so strong and brave and true. No matter what life has in store for her the love of her youth is safe. It will always be a warm, bright flame in her heart that can never change into the charred cinders of middle age. Her illusions are perfect and permanent. God

is love in her exalted conception, and her posthumous child created in the image of his father is a gift direct from Heaven.

Life must be very sweet to a man at twenty-five. It is to a woman at that age. But there were times when I looked at that war widow and wondered whether there were not men in the world who would be willing to die in their youth for the sake of living forever in the soul of such a woman.

At one of those receptions there were four sisters between twenty and thirty years of age whose husbands had all been killed. Naturally they resembled each other and their lovely faces seemed beatified by an inward spirit of grace.

Some of these women had suffered terribly, especially those who were left without means to support their children. There was one with four children whose husband had been killed in the first drive. The village where she had lived was occupied and although she was *enceinte* she was taken away and her child was born in captivity. Proper food was out of the question and she nursed her baby at her breast for thirty-two months in order to keep him alive. She was obliged to work from dawn until dark to provide for herself and little ones. They subsisted for months upon a mixture of corn and wheat which she milled together by hand, adding one egg daily at a cost of two francs. She was repatriated with her children in 1917, and went to work in a factory. It was impossible to earn enough to support herself and her babies, and she finally accepted soul-money from a "friend," and when she became *enceinte* she gave

up the fight and with her youngest child in her arms threw herself into the Seine. She was taken out of the river and brought to the House of the Good Neighbor, cared for until after this fourth child was born and provided with employment afterward that made it possible for her to live with her children as a mother should.

There was a very pretty woman from the *Département de l'Oise*, whose husband and six brothers had been killed during the war. Her house was burned by the Germans, her father was shot and her mother went mad and was removed to an asylum in Germany where she died. This young woman was taken into captivity and treated brutally. At last a German soldier at considerable risk to himself helped her to escape and she got back to her village, which was soon after taken by the English.

The following story has recently been sent to me from the House of the Good Neighbor, and any woman who cannot bear even to hear of the pain that other women have experienced personally had better not read it.

At the beginning of the war when Madam B——'s husband was killed, their only son was a child fifteen years old. He was called to the colors during the last year of the war and killed in action just before the signing of the armistice. After hostilities had been suspended his mother went to find his grave, and this is what she wrote to our lady at the House of the Good Neighbor:

"I got down at Soissons and walked for two hours before I reached Lassigny. I lifted up the helmets and coats on



the graves but could not find my son's. At last coming to some cross roads I met a man who told me to take a path through the woods. I followed this path and first came upon the grave of a German soldier whose feet stuck out. I went on and came to the grave of my poor little one, which was surrounded by water so that I had to wade in knee-deep to reach it. My poor little one's body was in the ground but uncovered from the knees to the feet. His clothes were in rags and his poor flesh was picked and gnawed by the crows and foxes, so that I could see his bones. Nearby there was another grave and the body was uncovered from the waist to the knees and gnawed to the bones. Many other bodies were in this condition. I did so want to give my poor little one a coffin, but they wanted to charge me 675 francs for four planks, and I could not give so much. The Americans have managed to bury their children, who are side by side in the cemetery like brothers, even as they went to the battle."

There was more in this letter, but this is enough. The attention of the proper authorities was called to this matter and the condition was corrected in so far as it was possible, and one war widow and bereaved mother is happier because her "poor little one" has been given a grave to himself.

The brightest, yet most pathetic, group that assembled at the House of the Good Neighbor were the war widows who had never been wives—the young girls who had been robbed of their birthright by this war of wars. They came on Tuesday evenings after their work was done in the munition factories. They were sweet, pretty creatures. Many of them had lovely voices and they sang instinctively like linnets in the spring-time. They did not realize that their mates

were dead; that their songs would never be answered and their nests would never be built.

These girls were consoling and supporting their mothers and sisters who had lost their husbands and sons. They were not old enough to comprehend what the war meant to them. They will never lose their husbands or sons. They will never have any to lose. They have lost the heart of life. Love itself has died on the battlefield, and the earthly immortality that comes through wifedom and motherhood is not for them. Theirs is the great loss. They will never understand the longing in their own souls. They will fight a losing fight. They will never say to their children, "Carry on!" Their race is run. Like neuter blossoms they will fall from the tree of life, and be blown willy-nilly across the waste, leaving nothing to bind them to the earth.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE DEATH DIRGE

THE great munition factory on the Quai de Javel is well and favorably known in America. It is the one the war tourists all tell about. This factory was a credit to France and when the divers and sundry commissions, touring the country in military motor cars, consuming precious "petrol," wanted to look into the munition factories of France in order that they might go home and disseminate information, this was the place most frequently exhibited. A normal individual or nation naturally puts her best foot forward, and France was perfectly normal in this respect.

During the first year of the war England came to France for ideas on munition factories, and in the third year France returned these visits with advantage to herself. France excelled in the initial emergency, but the taciturn Islanders were stronger on the long, steady pull. With France the beginning of the war was a sprint for life, but with England it was a Marathon from the start. While the rest of the world were making short time guesses, Lord Kitchener predicted "three years" and Great Britain prepared accordingly.

The plant on the Quai de Javel was modeled after the best that had been developed on the Island, with French modifications to meet national conditions. It

was a wonderful factory and a great show place during the last year of the war, but it did not represent the munition manufactories of France any more than an up-to-date steam laundry (if there was such an institution in the country) represented the laundry business.

France reacted instantly to the invasion, and her response to the demand for munitions in the beginning of the war was as brilliant an exploit as the Battle of the Marne. Her output of war materials during the first year was an achievement nothing less than miraculous. The annual commemoration of the Fall of the Bastille on July 14th, 1914, was as serene as a silver wedding. People were peacefully plying their friendly trades, but within a few months the industrial face of the nation had changed. The country was literally bristling with munition plants, and modern woman had found her place in modern warfare.

Practically all of the factories that had been running at an easy pace, producing commodities for the comfort and well-being of mankind, had been quickly converted into war mills. Day and night, Sundays and holidays, the machines were racing at a furious speed, creating death-dealing devices with which to protect the country against its mortiferous, treaty-breaking neighbors. Some of these peace-time plants had been easily adapted to the manufacture of munitions; others presented greater difficulties, and casual visitors from foreign countries were not invited to inspect the places where the one great credit was the credit due a high quality and high quantity output under seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

Every metal works, foundry, and ramshackle blacksmith shop had become a munition factory. According to the report of a special commission sent by Great Britain to France in November, 1915, there were 1800 of these work shops in the Paris district alone. Many of these small places were family affairs, and as the men were called to the army, their women, their wives and mothers, assumed their duties at home.

A woman with a son or husband at the front was never too tired to work, and a large number of these women exhausted themselves in a very short time. These small producers turned out good work, but their fervent spirit of self-sacrifice often defeated its own object. One instance will exemplify this general tendency. As superintendent in one of these shops a certain woman worked herself to death, and her loss was considered so great that her husband was recalled from the army to take her place.

During the first two years of the war it was easy to count the dead on the battlefield, but it was utterly impossible to estimate the indirect damage that resulted from self-immolation, deprivation and exhaustion. The whole social system had been suddenly disorganized. The strong young men had been withdrawn from their usual occupations and women substituted in many instances. Personal considerations were inhibited by the common danger. There was but one thought, one incentive—France.

“Munitions! Munitions!” This was the war call, and every patriotic heart in the land responded. The temperament of this people had much to do with the first year’s output. The life of the nation hung in the

Balance and a united effort was made to turn the scale. Inexperienced women entered all sorts of industries and their loyal, ardent spirits made up in part for their lack of training. There was a sort of religious fervor in their service. They worked and prayed like French nuns during a cholera plague. The mothers of families had a triple incentive: their country, their husbands and sons at the front, and their hungry children at home.

The French astonished the English with their prompt and phenomenal output of munitions, and although the English temperament is quite different, if London had stood in the place of Paris, perhaps the English would have astonished the French. With a murderous burglar at the window it is hard for a household to sit serenely down to dinner. No matter how hungry the members are they cannot think of food. And so they worked, these delicate, soft-fibered, unprepared women. There were no special arrangements made for their comfort. They ate where they could, and slept when they could. And after long, exhausting hours they went home and tried to care for their children.

It is said that during the great retreat which was miraculously turned into the Victory of the Marne, the French soldiers slept while they marched, and therein was their salvation. Among the munition makers exhausted women often fell asleep at their work, and some of their dauntless souls took flight unconquered from bodies too frail for the task.

But these women were uncomplaining. The places where they worked were not always healthful and

sanitary, but the trenches were not healthful and sanitary. There was no place to rest comfortably and safely at the front, and while the men of France were meeting hardships, danger and death with heroic fortitude, her women were willing to share their fate in so far as it was possible.

Compared with the usual apprenticeship period of a beginner in the different industries, these women developed remarkable efficiency in an unbelievably short time. There were things they could not do as well as men, but in most of the details of munition making it was about six of one and half dozen the other, and in some special processes that required delicacy of touch they exhibited a higher degree of skill. After all, housework with its various phases is pretty good industrial training. It gives a woman a sleight-of-hand which may in an emergency be turned to other uses. In one of the big factories that specialized on the manufacture of seventy-five millimeter shells, the manager told me that ninety per cent. of the work was done by women.

Plans for production had been quickly formulated at the beginning of the war, but no scheme for conserving the vitality of the producers, and a great waste of precious human health and strength resulted from this oversight. Thousands of men were lost at the front because France was not prepared to resist the sudden onslaught of the enemy, and thousands of women collapsed under the heavy burden they were called upon to bear in this emergency, who might have served continuously under better conditions.

That there is nothing to be gained by overwork is a

lesson that the world has paid a high price to learn. France had no choice in the beginning. She was obliged to pay the price and we have profited by her experience. The recommendations to arsenal commanders and other employers, contained in General Orders No. 13, issued from the office of the Chief of Ordnance, tended to discourage overtime and exhausting labor especially among women and children. There was an urgent call for an increase in the volume of production of practically every article required for the conduct of war, and in order to insure a continuous output it was fundamentally necessary to safeguard the health and strength of the workers.

The women of France were as brave as her men. The soul of their watchword was "Carry on." The only thing that mattered was the war. If a man fell at his gun, his place was filled and the fight went on. If a woman failed at her lathe, her place was filled and the work went on. Men might die and France might be lost, but not for the want of munitions if her women could help it.

Day and night in every city, town and village throughout the land, the varied and significant strains of the national symphony of war could be heard. There was the low hum of whirling wheels; the staccato tat-a-tat of the automatic hammer, like the sound of a machine gun at a distance; there was the buzz of mechanical drills, and the concomitant hiss and rattle of machinery, as though ten million serpents were coiling for a spring.

It was the Song of the Seventy-five; the Death Dirge to the invaders that the women of France were chant-



ing. There was no loud music; no sudden explosions of wrath like the bursting of bombs at the front. There were no silent intervals. It was a low, menacing sound, a constant grind—the grind of death. And it carried the conviction that “the female of the species is more deadly than the male.”

The vital participation of women in this war means that war must cease between nations, or men must fall lower than beasts. There is no beast that will attack the female of its own species, and the successful conduct of future wars means the wholesale killing of the women of the enemy as well as the men.

In all her glorious history France has no greater glory than the service of her women during this war. They seemed inspired with the spirit of Joan of Arc. The strength of the civilized world was required to overcome the demoniac militarism of Germany. The first terrible onslaught was met in large measure by France, and every man who stood in a trench had a woman standing behind him passing him the stuff to fight with.

Think of poor Russia compared with France and England in this respect. The Russians were brave soldiers, fighting without arms, and with the handicap of the Romanoffs. They were betrayed at every step. If that nation had been rid of her autocratic incubus, and her women with any kind of faithful leadership had stood behind their men, as the women of France and England stood, they would not have been slaughtered by the hundreds of thousands like helpless animals without means of defending their lives.

This was not the fault of the Russian women. Their souls were aflame with desire for service, but the nation was confused, and lacking leadership some of these women finally formed battalions and flung themselves desperately into the fighting lines.

The wonderful emergency work at the beginning of the war was done under all kinds of conditions. Time favored the Allies. As the months and years passed there was a general improvement. The great munition factories were rapidly developed. France settled down to the business of war, and a grim business it was. The changed industrial aspect of the nation had become stabilized by the time the United States joined the Allies. Almost a million women were employed in actual war work, besides all the volunteers in the field of fancy.

The Field of Fancy was a big field during the war and it was not "worked" entirely by women. A great many men rendered conspicuous service in this field and practically all of the positions of honor and emolument were filled by the stronger sex—but this is another story. Most of the real industries depended more or less upon the work of women, and efforts were being made to maintain their efficiency under the strain of long hours and hard labor. These women working shoulder to shoulder by the thousands were a revelation to the world. Deluded gentlemen of the old school addicted to alcoholic beverages and pseudo-chivalric twaddle of the post-prandial variety could scarcely believe their newspapers. What was the world coming to?

The foot that rocked the cradle could also run a wicked munition machine, and the dainty hand that embroidered a pinning blanket was deft and naturally adapted to caulking ships at six dollars a day in the United States, and filling explosive bombs at about eight francs a day in France where food had to be imported, and coal was sold by the kilogram.

In perhaps the greatest munition factory in France on one occasion I was going down a flight of stairs leading to a floor where there were at least a hundred strong looking women driving spikes of some sort with heavy, short handled sledge-hammers. They all looked up curiously because my clothes were foreign, and therefore interesting to women, and I noticed that they did not miss a stroke of their hammers, nor did they miss a detail of my costume. Without looking at what they were doing they used their sledges with force and precision, and the popular fallacy that a woman cannot drive a nail was plucked from my mental cabinet and scrapped instantly.

The women of France were making shells, loading them and packing them for shipment. They worked on all kinds of trench warfare supplies, and general armament from hand grenades to marine mines, and from fuses to aëroplanes. Men were wearing gas-masks at the front to protect themselves from German gas, and women were wearing gas-masks in the munition factories to protect themselves from the poisonous fumes of T.N.T. and other fulminating combinations they were preparing to shower upon the invaders. Many of the materials used in the manufacture of munitions were deadly poisons, the emanations from

which toxicated the atmosphere and affected susceptible persons.

There was a double danger in working with high explosives. Most of this work was done by women. Their care and dexterity reduced disastrous accidents to a minimum, but unfortunately they seemed more sensitive to these poisons than men. Some of them developed toxic jaundice and other fatal maladies, and in many cases the skin and hair of the T.N.T. workers turned bright yellow, although they were not incapacitated for duty. In England these women were nicknamed "canaries" on account of their startling color. These "Golden Girls" should all have been decorated, for no greater courage was exhibited during the war than that required to face a mysterious danger of this kind.

Levallois was a factory town. Practically all of the plants were engaged in war work. Thousands of women were employed, and many of these women came to the House of the Good Neighbor when they were sick and in distress. The endurance of women afflicted with chronic ailments was beyond understanding. I remember examining a woman who was suffering from one of the most distressing diseases incident to the maternal function. She was living at one of the foundation apartment houses. Her husband was a soldier and she had three little girls to support. This woman was absolutely unfit to be on her feet at all, but back she went to her lathe in spite of her condition. Her children needed the eight francs a day she could earn, and like other mothers of her type she would work until she dropped

at her task. The House of the Good Neighbor arranged to give her government sewing, and to make up the difference in what she could earn doing light work at home instead of heavy work at the factory.

## CHAPTER XIII

### WAR TOURISTS

THE American Medical Women's National Association had authorized me to make a survey in France for the purpose of determining what American women physicians might advantageously do in the way of relief work for French women and children, and about the first thing this survey revealed was that France was tired of surveyors. Mine was a thankless job. The French people were very polite, but they were weary of being investigated. All the world hates an investigating committee, and as a choice of evils self-respecting man would rather go hungry than have the entire length of his digestive tract scrutinized and its innermost secrets revealed, discussed and officially recorded.

For three long years France had been fighting for her life. Her wounds were deep and her nerves were raw. She was sadly in need of help, but she was tired of having her social system turned inside out and the seams examined. From the beginning of the war the whole world had been clamoring for first hand information regarding every phase of French life. In answer to this demand commissioners and representatives had been sent from organizations and colleges, and all kinds and conditions of news-gatherers from

the ends of the earth had been combing that hungry country and consuming food and fuel without compunction during the process.

France had suffered two invasions. The invasion of her enemies and the invasion of her friends. The Hun was at the gate—the front gate. And we were at the gate—the back gate, with excellent intentions and ravenous appetites. The defenders of the front gate knew just what to do, but the diplomatic corps at the back gate was at its wits' ends. It was impossible to differentiate between a good American and a pacifist, and the pretexts of the tourists traveling to gratify personal curiosity were so plausible as absolutely to defy detection.

In accordance with the precedent established by the Royal House of England in discarding its German name, every friend or enemy who wanted to get into France changed his name if it had the slightest Teutonic taint. The glory had departed from the proud prefix *von* in all countries save the "fatherland." Something had happened to the *vons*. They were no longer in evidence. They had either been scrapped or changed to *vans*. A rose by any other name may smell as sweet, but the French olfactory nerve was supersensitive, and an American with the prefix *von* attached to his name would have experienced difficulty getting into France during the war.

This sentiment against the *vons* was pure prejudice. The agents of the enemy were careful about their names. They selected inconspicuous and inoffensive cognomens. As a matter of fact the friends and enemies of France looked, dressed and acted so

much alike that it was impossible to tell the difference between them, and the only safe course was to take precautions against them all.

The enemies of the nation insinuated themselves into her confidence, searching out her weak points in order to betray and destroy her, while her friends were just as actively engaged searching out her weak points in order to support and defend her. Their methods were identical, but their purposes were as far apart as life and death. It was very confusing, and the lack of a common language added to the difficulty.

Notices were posted in all the railway stations and public conveyances warning the people to beware of strangers who might be spying out the land. The enemy never sleeps; his eyes and ears are always open; stop, look, and listen, but hold your tongue, was the gist of this official advice.

A better understanding of these difficulties may be possible if we try to imagine ourselves in the position of the French people. It is hard for an American to visualize imminent national annihilation in the form of a destructive military force only a few miles away; it is harder to imagine our beautiful country maimed, bleeding, destitute, and in need of the assistance of the people of friendly nations; and it is still harder to think what we would do under such circumstances.

We would know just what to do to our enemies—but our friends? What would we do with or without our friends? Without them we would starve. And with them—well, suppose we were short of food and fuel, and they came flocking in from France or England with appalling appetites, and a consuming mania



for bathing their persons separately in large quantities of hot water. Suppose their journalists, doctors, social workers, statisticians, and all the voluntary aids of these well wishers, nosed through our houses, manhandling our children, lifting their hair in ostensible admiration while furtively glancing behind their ears for nits. Suppose we were hoping for immediate help, and after looking under our beds, inspecting our back-yards, searching every nook and corner and exchanging remarks in a language we did not understand, these good people merely smiled enigmatically and went away to make reports, recommendations and plans for our benefit which we had no means of knowing anything about,—what would we do?

Think of the French Relief Commission on a tour of inspection passing lightly over our excellent plumbing, and pausing non-committally before some of our works of art. Could anything be more harrowing? Think of all the other commissions! Think of Charles Dickens, Harriet Martineau, Rudyard Kipling and Maxim Gorky, on friendly visits in times of peace. In view of the shortcomings of every nation in the eyes of every other nation, how would we like to read the translations of the confidential reports of investigating committees to the different organizations they were representing? Would we bear with becoming fortitude the constructive criticism of the Relief Commission of the Italian Benevolent Society, or would we consign it promptly and without regard for consequences to the limbo of good intentions?

What would we do? No one can answer that question. But if we had suffered as much as the French,

perhaps we would be a patient, long-suffering people. In token of a national soul unconquerable we might lift up our heads in dauntless weakness and smile defiantly in the face of our enemy, while we said to our friends in sweet humility, give us help, give us bread, but please do not investigate our habits and institutions at this time.

By September, 1917, there was no dearth of agencies through which assistance could be offered to the people of France. Several American societies were already known throughout the country for their good works, and the open sesame through which information regarding the probable value of special service could be gathered without giving offense, was through one of the established organizations which had already won the confidence of the different communities.

Within a few days of my arrival in France I had joined the medical staff of the Children's Bureau of the American Red Cross and my duties in connection with this organization and with the House of the Good Neighbor gave me unusual opportunities of observing the effects of warfare upon women and children.

After three months' service in the Paris district I applied for work nearer to the front. The continuous round of suffering without the slightest excitement to vary the monotony was getting on my nerves. I loved the House of the Good Neighbor and everybody in it, but I did not go to France solely for the sake of peace and quiet. I had a ranch in the western woods especially provided for this purpose, where I expected to spend my declining years garrulously telling over the

events of the world's war, and three months had passed and I had not seen so much as a sky rocket.

The appalling effects of war were all too apparent. It was impossible to evade them. Wounded, maimed and blinded soldiers walked the streets. Impoverished refugees crowded the rookeries. The human stream circulating through the surface and subterranean arteries of the city was made up largely of men in uniform, women in mourning, and orphans without regalia to proclaim the supreme misfortune.

The American Ambulance Hospital at Neuilly was only fifteen minutes' walk from the House of the Good Neighbor, and there it was possible to see en masse the effects of warfare upon men who had been disabled by wounds. The loss of arms, legs and sight was terrible enough, but the destructive face wounds seemed most tragic. The men so maimed are permanently deprived of the normal means of expression. Their faces are hideous masks for their thoughts. In fighting for life and liberty they have lost in large measure the possibility of happiness—the most precious privilege of mankind. Human happiness depends so much upon the reactions we produce upon each other, and when a man has been rendered so repulsive that every one turns from him, and he shrinks from his own reflection, and shudders at the sound of his own voice, which has become a weird whistle, or an unnatural hiss, his chances for happiness are limited to the possibilities of his lone, imprisoned soul.

The woman power of the Paris district had stirred my imagination. I had watched the munition makers turning out shells, bombs and hand grenades, and I

wanted to hear some of them explode. Dynamic energy was gathered, primed and loaded at this point. This was the source of the cataclysm—the death, devastation and all the horrors of hell turned loose at the front. The city of Paris was an active volcano with destructive surface eruptions all along the line from the North Sea to Switzerland, but it seemed so quiet, tense and tranquil. Nothing spectacular occurred. Not so much as an air raid had taken place for months.

Fortunately some things come to those who wait and watch and pray, and test everything that looks like opportunity, if they keep at it long enough, and finally my time came. A Red Cross woman was wanted to go to the United States bearing a message regarding Red Cross work in France, and inasmuch as I had been authorized to make a survey for the Medical Women's National Association, and this action had been indorsed by the representatives of many of the national organizations of American women assembled at the call of the Woman's Committee, National Council of Defense, I was selected for this double service and instructed to make a report through the Woman's Committee, National Council of Defense, to the national organizations of American women, and to be prepared to speak for the Red Cross in the United States.

I was familiar with the Red Cross work in the Paris district, and in order that I might gather information regarding the different phases of this service in other parts of France, I was sent from place to place during the following two months.

When first notified of this plan it seemed too good

to be true. There was just one insect in the ointment: the natural dread that I might be mistaken for a war tourist, and although appearances were against me at times, lack of opportunity kept my conscience clear. Everybody in service hated the war tourist. The general sentiment was expressed by the Salvation Army man, who was asked to lead in prayer one fine Sunday on a liner bound for Bordeaux, and he prayed aloud in an earnest manner that the passengers might be inspired with a fervent desire to render real service, and that certain groups aboard might not be going for the purpose of junketing through the war-stricken countries as seemed most likely.

There were men and women who worked for months within a few miles of the most interesting points along the front without getting so much as a peep at the things they were dying to see, and their disappointment was constantly aggravated by the sight of war tourists flashing by in military machines, with gas masks hung on their necks and shrapnel helmets on their heads.

The contemplation of my impeccable itinerary is a joy in retrospection. This evidence of rectitude gives me a great advantage and whenever I hear a war tourist talking about Verdun or Rheims (especially a woman) and pronouncing it "rans" instead of "reemz," I can ask myself with the consciousness of a blameless schedule what he was doing there. "But conscience doth make cowards of us all," and that psychological inconvenience compels me at this moment to acknowledge that the credit for my record in

this respect is due to the regulations, and an utter inability on my part to circumvent them.

I tried to work one little side trip, but lacked the necessary pull. There was a town on my list only a few miles from Rheims, and when I timidly suggested this slight deviation from the direct line of duty, the Red Cross man whose business it was to secure permits from the French military authorities for Red Cross people to travel, barked at me savagely as though I had offered him a bribe to betray the government, and said he wasn't running a tourist's office.

The man had evidently suffered a lot. My humble appeal must have been the last straw, for he turned loose and poured out a flood of pertinent imprecations upon the helmeted heads of all kinds and conditions of sight-seers that infested the country, nosing through the war zone on one pretext or another into places where they had no business, killing the time of perfectly good soldiers who were assigned to take care of them, increasing the danger to the places they visited, and wasting gasoline—the very life-blood of the nation.

His arguments were convincing. It was clear that no honorable person would even think of going to Rheims except on important business, and I reproached myself for the imprudence which had led me into betraying such unworthiness of spirit.

Several weeks later I was obliged to wait about five hours at the station of this little town for a train, and I naturally passed the time wishing I could go to Rheims, and wondering how far I would get if I

started on foot without a military pass. The adventure appealed to me. It seemed so harmless. It would not involve the killing of any soldier's valuable time, or increase the danger to the cathedral, or waste any of the nation's vital fluid. Besides, I might never get so near to Rheims again.

The history of that fascinating old city beckoned me, and the desire to see the ruined cathedral grew stronger as the minutes wasted. It was there that Charles VII was crowned indirectly by the hand of Joan of Arc. This was the beginning of the end of the Hundred Years' War. What a pity Joan's angel did not tell her to seize the crown for herself. Such a course might have saved France from the later day Louis' and prevented the Revolution.

This treasonable train of thought was cut short by the arrival of a French nurse who had walked twenty miles, getting an occasional lift along the way, in order to bring me a message. She did not seem exhausted, and her performance impressed me favorably. It made getting to Rheims look easy. She spoke English fairly well, and with such a companion anything seemed possible. She had already come twenty miles, and an extra ten was a very short distance in view of the reward at the end. Strange to say she was shocked at the idea. We had no business at Rheims. That settled it so far as she was concerned. The French people were as conscientious about getting in the way and clogging the war machinery, as patriotic Americans were about eating meat on Tuesdays.

Our plans had been changed on account of a short-

age of gasoline in the district from which she had come. There was no "petrol" to be had in the country without a military requisition, and when the local well in any district was running dry, civil affairs had to wait. Gasoline was a precious commodity. Work was limited by the lack of it. Madame Curie, the most distinguished woman scientist in the world and the discoverer of radium, told me that her inability to get around, resulted in a distressing loss of time that ought to be saved for her scientific work, and asked if it would be possible to secure a small allowance of gasoline through the American Red Cross.

Americans living in France and visiting the country on different missions enjoyed exceptional privileges. Most of us ate without saying "grace" and asking ourselves frankly why we should have plenty of food while the people in the country went hungry, and we rode in automobiles without a thought of the gasoline that should have been saved for the use of those capable of rendering greater service.

Unfortunately, the average individual judges the world by his personal experience, and many an American left France feeling that conditions were not so bad, simply because he had had plenty to eat, a warm room, and a car at his disposal, when as a matter of fact it was difficult for the population to get food, impossible to get fuel, and in many places the people had reverted to walking just as they used to do before the advent of trains, trams and automobiles.

The French nurse had started back to her station hoping for good luck and a ride at least part of the way, and I had settled down unresignedly for another



long wait, when a train arrived and a distinguished looking group of my countrymen descended from the first class carriage. Guess who they were. They were members of the American Food Commission on their way to Rheims.

Their presence at that point impressed me profoundly. It is quite possible for me to think of the Rheims Cathedral without thinking of the American Food Commission, but since that disappointing day I have never thought of the American Food Commission without a concurrent thought of the Rheims Cathedral. Normally, naturally, and by all the rules of order, this commission should suggest food conservation, substitution, balanced rations, caloric values, canteen menus, including imitation beef steaks and horse-meat, and by contrast, all the dietary delights of home. But things in this world do not always happen according to orderly rules and regulations. I did not meet the American Food Commission in the Municipal Canteen sampling a dinner of horse-meat, I met them on the way to Rheims, and being human and therefore limited largely by personal observations and reactions, the American Food Commission always suggests the Rheims Cathedral to me.

The members of that commission had no doubt been carefully selected. They looked as if they knew a lot about food. They were manifestly men of parts, and built on generous proportions. The minute I saw them I felt that my prayer had been answered, for Solomon himself said, "the liberal soul shall be made fat," and there was only one lean and hungry looking member in the party. He must

have been the hired man, the publicity man, for he spoke to me quite naturally as one American should speak to another in a foreign land, and I felt certain that he was going to invite me to go with the company to Rheims.

He was a pleasant spoken man and I think his intentions were hospitable, for he went over and talked to the more important appearing persons, while I stood by the window exultantly humming, "Hail! Hail! The Gang's All Here!" under my breath, and hoping, Hoping, HOPING, for them to come and ask me to go with them.

Be it remembered in extenuation that they were large and heavy in the aggregate. They required much space. The car and the passengers together must have weighed about three tons. This observation revived my waning hope. It takes such a lot of gasoline to haul three tons, that my light weight would not have made any difference, and I might easily have sat on the folded roof behind the tonneau. But they did not ask me. They did not even look in my direction. They drove away and left me smiling at grief, and feeling that the last door leading to Rheims had been closed.

During the monotonous hours that followed, the interesting possibilities of the side trip I didn't get, passed through my mind one after another. Perhaps the car would be commandeered and those members of the American Food Commission would be stranded at Rheims and compelled to live in the crypts under the cathedral with shells bursting all around them. Such an adventure would be enough to retire on. It

would furnish talking material for the final score of life. Perhaps they would be obliged to put on their steel bonnets and gas-masks and make their escape, ducking from one mud-puddly shell-hole to another, and dodging shrapnel along the road. This was a thrilling thought, and I stopped to make a wish on my luck ring. I wished the hired man might get away. Then envy suggested a last, comforting possibility and a joke on the enemy. Perhaps the Boches would get the others and have to feed them all winter.

## CHAPTER XIV

### EVIAN

AT the House of the Good Neighbor I had met *rapatriés* who had been evicted from their homes in the northern provinces, sent into southern France through Switzerland, assigned to the Paris district, and finally drifted to Levallois. These people told strange and tragic tales which prepared me somewhat for the colossal exhibition of misery which I afterward saw at Evian les Bains, the small town on Lake Geneva, near the Swiss frontier, through which the intermittent streams of human war wastage that had passed through the military mill in the invaded provinces was emptied into that part of France "still unoccupied."

There was no difficulty in securing permits to travel, for the Red Cross maintained a bureau with official intermediaries who vouched for accredited applicants, and saved the French military authorities the trouble of investigating each case separately. There were no sleeping cars going to Evian, but when my permit and ticket were passed to me I was told just how to secure a *courette* in order to travel comfortably during the night.

The plan was very simple. It was merely a matter of passing twenty francs to the conductor surrepti-

tiously, and asking for a *couchette*. This was a sort of a near-sleeper. There were four of these bunks in the compartment to which I was assigned and the other three were occupied by American soldiers. This was a suspicious circumstance in view of the fact that the eighty francs we paid for those *couchettes* proved such a poor investment.

Those boys must have had clear consciences and good digestions. A few minutes after stretching out on their diminutive couches they were sound asleep. They were fine, clean looking young men, and their presence made the compartment seem like home, sweet home. The place was dark; the window was open; the air was fresh; four pairs of friendly appearing American shoes were lined up under the lower *couchettes*. I felt very fortunate indeed, but such felicity was not to last. We were less than fifty miles from Paris when the conductor came rushing through the car, flashed a lantern into our compartment and ordered everybody out, but made no reference to the *couquette* fund. That was confiscated. "*C'est la Guerre.*" The car had been commandeered, so he said, and we were hustled into the darkness with our baggage in our hands. This coup was so sudden that we scarcely realized what had happened until we saw our costly sleeping car shunting off toward a side track, and then we said farewell to our *couchettes* and to each other and went our separate ways through the regular coaches hunting any kind of a seat that might be vacant.

My new traveling companions were five French officers in a six passenger compartment. They were

all smoking cigarettes and the first glance into that little cubby-hole vaguely suggested an impressionistic picture I had seen somewhere—a maze in horizon blue. Their uniforms were horizon blue; the atmosphere was horizon blue; and their figures merged so imperceptibly into the surrounding medium that my first impression was a hazy confusion of horizon blue.

The vacant seat was near the window. This would naturally be the last place chosen for night travel, for no matter how well a window is made a current of air may sift in around the sash. There is nothing more terrifying in all France than a current of night air. The fear of drafts is a national obsession, which is expressed in a special tax on windows, and the law which prohibits the raising of a window in a car if one present objects. A soldier straight from the trenches dreads a draft as much as a civilian, and the minute he enters a place that can be closed he proceeds to make it snug, air-tight and home-like.

Those officers were unquestionably brave men. One of them wore the *Croix de Guerre*. But when I raised the window they looked at each other and shivered apprehensively as if they expected a gas attack, and one of them actuated by a desire to do me a service and to protect every one in the compartment, gently but firmly closed the window and warned me against the evil effects of night air, especially on trains.

In that little section, which was about 6 x 7 x 8, six of us spent the night, and not another breath of fresh air did we get until morning. The intentions of my comrades were so kindly that I could not complain,

and so I leaned my head in the corner and went to sleep. Later in the night my dreams seemed crowded, and I vaguely sensed a rhythmical wave of garlic that seemed closer, more intimate, and stronger than the atmosphere itself, and raising my eyelids ever so little I discovered my seat-mate sound asleep with his head resting peacefully on my shoulder. My first impulse was to withdraw the support, but when I noticed that he was unconsciously serving his brother officer in a similar manner, and that the soldiers three on the opposite side of the compartment were sustaining each other manfully, and doing effective teamwork in co-operation with Morpheus, I felt that such an act would be unworthy of a friend and an ally.

As soon as the sun was up in the morning the officer who seemed to be in command opened the window and took in a supply of air, just as the engineer might take enough water to last for the rest of the run. When this was accomplished the compartment was closed, and a few minutes later I changed cars for Evian les Bains.

Winding down grade toward Lake Geneva I became conscious of a pleasing combination of our national colors along the shore. Rows of red-topped white buildings on the edge of the blue lake produced the effect of a red, white and blue border. Evian les Bains nestled at the foot of the slope on the French side of the water directly opposite the Swiss City of Lausanne. The day was delightful. The outlook was all loveliness—a marvelous stretch of beauty and a joy forever. A majestic range of mountains overshadowed the lake at one point, and just beyond a

bend the Castle of Chillon, with its suggestion of suffering, was hidden from view.

Before the war Evian was a popular pleasure resort. During the war it was more popular. In ante-bellum days it was a place where well-to-do people went for rest and relaxation. For the last two years of the terrible scourge it was the gateway to France from the land beyond the trenches. And the gateway to the mother-country had become a pleasant prospect to helpless thousands living in duress, in the occupied provinces, under the harsh rule of the "fatherland."

Prior to the invasion Evian was frequented by people to whom fortune had been kind, but subsequently it was the place where thousands and thousands of those who had sounded all the shoals and deeps of misery found relief and drew their first free breath after more than three years of suffering and oppression. The town is beautifully situated. As a setting for a pleasure resort the site is perfect, and the extravagant equipment, designed to attract the patronage of people with the means of gratifying luxurious tastes, was easily adapted to the uses of those who had not where to lay their heads.

The hotels were crowded with the guests of the nation—the sick and the helpless who had been robbed of their homes in the northern provinces and literally dumped into France at this point. The American Red Cross was using one of the finest hotels as a children's hospital for contagious diseases, and another large building that had been purchased a short time before the war by an enterprising American for the purpose



of opening a hotel, had been turned into a hospital for parasitic skin diseases—a delousing station.

The town had practically dedicated itself to the service of the *rapatriés*. A fashionable boarding school of former days was used as a home for the aged who had survived the hardships of the invasion, and the Casino, that seventh heaven of the sporting world, where the devotees of baccarat formerly assembled, *faro* was the pass-word, and the roulette wheels were running overtime, had become a Temple of Thanksgiving where the ceremonies welcoming the *rapatriés* to the free provinces of the mother-country were conducted every evening after the train arrived.

These *rapatriés* were people of no military value. That is why they were sent out of the northern provinces by the dictators temporarily in control. The plan was the last word in practical warfare. It must have been devised by an efficiency expert. Under military authority the invaders were sifting and sorting the people of the occupied territory as though they were cattle instead of human beings. Those without military value were robbed of their earthly possessions, evicted en masse from their native towns and villages, herded together, and finally deported by a circuitous route through Belgium, Germany, and Switzerland, and dumped into the open arms of France at Evian, from which point they were assigned to the different departments of the country.

Those with military values were detained by their conquerors. And this suggests the question, what are military values? Are they not fighting values, labor values and breeding values?

The rules governing the separation of families in the provinces subjected to the Prussian process of selection are worth analyzing. No strong boys over fourteen years of age were sent to Southern France; no strong girls over sixteen; no strong young women unless they had more than one child. Why?

There must have been some military reason. Why were the boys of fourteen and their sisters of sixteen detained, while their sisters of fourteen went into the discard and were deported from their homes in the northern provinces with their mothers and the younger children? Is it possible that it was because a young girl of that age is usually delicate and unable to perform hard labor, and if she has a child it is apt to be a weakling?

What was the reason for the ruling under which young women with one child were detained? Was there a double reason? Was it because a young woman with only one child had a labor value greater than that required for the care of the child, together with the fact that for three years the young Frenchmen from that territory had been either in the French army south of the trenches, or in some German prison camp, and therefore the child was probably the child of a German?

Whatever the reasons may have been, these were some of the rules. At the time I was at Evian the convoys of military culls were arriving with regularity. From a thousand to twelve hundred of the despised and rejected of the enemy were sent in daily—and who were these? These were the people who could not produce as much as they consumed, and

who were, therefore, a burden to a nation at war. By dumping them on France, Germany lightened her war load, and increased the war load of France to just that extent. These poor people were the very old and the very young, the cancerous, disease-bearing, degenerate, insane, and the living remains of women.

There was always a large number of aged men and women with the mixed convoys. Some of these broken families had from one to four grandparents, and prior to the installation of the Red Cross Ambulance Service women with little children clinging to their skirts were sometimes obliged to drag paralyzed grandparents in a hand cart.

The journey was long and exhausting. It took three days and nights, and fortunately many of the aged died from prostration on the way, or soon after their arrival. The attitude of some of these old people was very pathetic. They seemed to begrudge themselves the little food they ate, because they were taking it from France and unable to give anything in return.

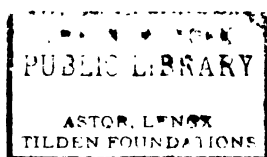
The most interesting old man I met in France arrived with one of these convoys. He was an American citizen and he did not lose any time making it known. It had been a long time since he had spoken English and he halted a little, but there was something in his choice of words that smacked of the Golden Gate. He introduced himself at once and told me that he had lived many years in San Francisco—"the only city in the world," he added, with all the pride of a native son, and I knew that the Bay City was the home of his heart.



**RAPATRIÉS**



**THE MILITARY DISCARD**



He had served in the Franco-Prussian War and had left France to avoid a repetition of that terrible experience, but after many years he had returned and married a woman at Neufchatel. On her account he had remained, although he had a home in San Francisco and had always wanted to go back to it. She dreaded earthquakes, the poor sick woman. La! La! The earth had quaked around her for the past three years, and now she was anxious to go. But it was too late. She would never see San Francisco, "the only city in the world." A terrible malady had overtaken her. She was slowly dying from cancer.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE WAR BLIGHT

It is impossible to think of the women who came with those convoys, the mothers of families and other wretched, over-worked, under-fed, ill-treated, worn-out women, without deploring the waste of womanhood the war involved and mentally contrasting its widely different effects upon the women who lived in the invaded provinces and actually experienced the practical application of the plan designed to conquer the world, and their sisters who had the luck to live on the free side of the trenches and fight with the defenders of democracy.

The French women who spent the war years south of the battle-line grew strong and self-reliant in service and honorable sacrifice. The streets of Paris are black with women who wear their weeds in dignity and solemn pride. But the women who had been subjected to the imperializing process, and afterward sent from the invaded provinces with a "safe conduct" which carried no guarantee of safety en route, showed their sorrow, not in their strength and pride and regalia of grief, but in their bent figures and dead faces.

The brand of the beast was on them. They had passed through the hand of the enemy and his bloody finger-prints had marked their souls. Their senses

were benumbed. Their eyes had been blinded by the glare of horrors they were powerless to prevent. Their ears had been deafened by the sound of roaring cannon turned against their sons, and the frenzied "mother" calls of their daughters led away by their masters, the military police.

The exploitation of many of these women seemed complete. Not a spark of life or a unit of energy that the system could extract and utilize for profit or pleasure was in evidence. For over three years they had worked and starved and suffered. Indignity had been their portion. Their souls had been strangled and they seemed dead to everything that makes life worth living. Coming from the train they somehow suggested ambulating corpses, but the free atmosphere and the sound of French music apparently revived them. They did not respond at once, but here and there, with the first strain of the *Marseillaise* a spirit flamed, and those of us who recognized the miracle felt that we were standing in the presence of a resurrection.

About fifty per cent. of this influx of wretchedness was made up of children between three and fourteen years of age. There were fatherless children, motherless children, and many little children who had been lost by their parents in the confusion of war, and who did not know who they were or where they belonged. Comparatively few of these little ones were less than three years of age. This was undoubtedly due to the military ruling in the invaded provinces which prohibited the repatriation of any strong young woman with but one child. There were some children less



than three years of age with the incoming families, and in all too many instances these were the misbegotten babies of the Boche.

Poor little poachers at injured mothers' breasts! The sins of their fathers will be visited upon them by all save the women against whom those sins were committed. The milk of human kindness may be denied them, but the fact that they were alive proved that the milk of motherhood had not been withheld from their lips. The fact that they were alive proved that the mother instinct is stronger than human laws or conventions. It is stronger than hate or love—it is mother-love, an instinct that the human female has in common with the females of the lower animals. This is the power that forces a little rabbit to stand between a lion and her young, and a woman is no more accountable for it than she is for the color of her eyes. It has nothing to do with reason, it is instinct pure and simple incorporated by nature into the very being of the normal female for the preservation of the species.

Provision had been made at Evian for taking these babies out of French families and bringing them up as orphans. Fortunately there were not many of them, for this matter always involved a heart-breaking struggle—the struggle of reason against instinct; the agony of mother-love divided against itself—the love of a woman for her older children contending in her heart with the divine pity she felt for the helpless babe at her breast. The nurse in charge of this service told me that some of these children were left at Evian, but most of the mothers refused to give them up. In this connection it must be remembered that the women in

whom the mother instinct was undergrade did not bring any infants to Evian. Their war babies died soon after they were born.

One woman who refused to leave her baby explained that the welfare of her entire family, three children and her old father and mother, depended upon her attitude, and that she was not responsible for the war. Her future could easily be foretold. She had a boy of thirteen, and when some one spoke to him about his brother he answered scornfully: "It is my mother's baby, but it is not my brother, it is a Boche."

Another poor mother who had been persuaded to give up her baby went to the station with her other children to join the outgoing convoy, but before the train arrived she turned suddenly and rushing down the hill to the place where she had left the child, snatched it up and carried it away with her.

The most tragic and lasting phase of the war was the outraged motherhood it involved. The whole plan of social life was disrupted and the supporting members of most families called away. What were the dependent ones to do? The women who had been most carefully protected by their husbands and fathers were the most helpless. History simply repeated itself. Under such circumstances there is a constant and increasing pressure to which large numbers of women have always been compelled to yield. The cumulative power of fear and want is harder to resist than violence. The German women in their own homes have not escaped this evil, and the women of the invaded countries have been its greatest victims.

War babies are the living evidence of a force far

greater than violence or deliberate villainy. They are the issue of war, and the changed conditions and relationships resulting from war. They are the by-products of individual protectorates temporarily established. In an environment of inhumanity compassion is a Godlike quality that the heart of woman was not made to resist. The brutal soldier who breaks down the door of a house with the butt of his rifle is not so dangerous to the honor or happiness of that household as the one whose pity is really awakened by the distress of a woman whose personality appeals to him, and who comes in kindness with a loaf of bread for her children and who actually affords her protection against all save himself.

Warfare is much worse for women than for men. Men have the right of death and they die fighting gloriously for their ideals. But women must live and be confiscated with the goods and chattels. A woman without children meets death like a man, but a woman with children clings to life with her last breath, as though she dares not die and meet her Maker with her duty left undone. There is nothing a normal woman will not sacrifice for the sake of her children; there is nothing she will not suffer; there is nothing she will not resort to, and her last resort is herself.

Personal charm is the double-edged weapon with which women through all the ages have been obliged to meet their conquerors. This was the sword in the hand of Judith; the means with which Esther "found favor" and saved her people; the armament with which Cleopatra held back the legions of Rome. In



**WAR BABIES**

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times of war this rule has reached from the Queen to her lowliest subject. The price of "favor" in a conquered country has always been rapacious and women have usually been compelled to pay this price to their military masters.

War, Famine and Plague are natural allies—three in one; a hell-born trinity. When the dogs of war are loosed, hunger, cold, over-crowding and disease can be depended upon to add to the havoc. These forces never fail. The women in the war-stricken countries have sacrificed everything women hold dear to save their children from suffering and death, and their sacrifices have been in vain. The inhumanity of this war to little children and their mothers cannot be described. It involves a series of horrors surpassing the possibilities of human language. Had it been reported that any country had stood a million little ones against the death wall and shot them one by one, the world would have risen instantly to put an end to such barbarous outrages forever. But the little children in the war swept countries were not treated with such consideration. They were gradually starved and died by thousands and hundreds of thousands and perhaps millions before their mothers' eyes.

The daily convoys of *rapatriés* were very much alike. They differed chiefly in degrees of wretchedness, and their condition was a fair index of the treatment which had been accorded them in the towns from which they had come. Special convoys of children were sometimes received. Orphanages in the northern provinces were lifted by the mailed hand and

shaken out at Evian. On one occasion a convoy made up of the inmates of an insane asylum was brought through and politely passed to France.

A band with a trumpeter met every train, and the reactions of the children to the French bugle call, and the strange sights and sounds and friendly offices, differed according to their ages. For more than three years they had lived in a circumscribed hell created by their enemies. The world and all its joys had been closed to them. But those who were old enough to remember the happy days before the war, had faith that there was a heaven on earth that had not been invaded, which their fathers and big brothers who had marched away so long before were still fighting to defend.

These children responded instantly to the new environment. They had reached the frontier of the promised land. All their troubles were over. Of course they were weary, stunted, diseased and covered with vermin. That was the customary condition of people where they came from. But at Evian the mountains were white, the lake was blue, and the sky was clear though it rained pitchforks, because there was no Hun on the horizon, and they were going to have all kinds of good things to eat for dinner.

It is said that the oppressed soul finds expression in music and maybe it does. Perhaps that is why those youngsters had such an astounding repertoire of catchy, waggish little war songs, dedicated disrespectfully to the Kaiser and his "kult." Many of those songs embodied treasonable sentiment, and the one which seemed most popular ended with an incriminat-

ing refrain to this effect: "We never will be happy 'til his head's cut off!"

Those dear little dare-devils had all committed the heinous crime of *lèse majesté* in addition to lesser offenses against the imperial government. There was no doubt about it. They gloried in their guilt and confessed it openly. In secret and dark places they had made faces at the high officials—and they were still making them. With abysmal disrespect for the despotic source of the official orders pasted on the front walls of ruined houses and other places in their home towns—orders which, perhaps, forbade hens to lay eggs clandestinely and without the knowledge of the military authorities—these young rebels had decorated the back walls with pictures of insubordinate chickens, and caricatures of the Crown Prince and other conquering heroes, confronted with figures standing at attention with their thumbs suspiciously near their noses, some of which strikingly resembled the original reliefs found in the Tombs of the Ptolemies.

Poor little bundles of skin and bone and brain! They had been starved, brow-beaten and intimidated in every way. Nothing had been left undone to make them loyal, Kaiser-loving subjects. But they were incorrigible. They belonged to a perverse race and generation. There was no gratitude in them. And the fact that they had learned these songs, passed them along and popularized them under conditions carefully calculated to put fear into the hearts of men, proved conclusively that the Prussian system was altogether too humane to be effective, and that the only



way to conquer such a people was to exterminate it root and branch.

The younger children who had no memories but the memories of war and horror were not so responsive. They were dumb and apprehensive in manner. Dread and distrust of strangers developed with their baby teeth. Strange men in uniform suggested the Boche, and they shrank away and clung to their mother's skirts—when they had any mothers. They were a fear-bred children. They had always lived under the ban of silence and they could not so readily cast it off.

"Hush! Hush!" had been their mother's admonition from the beginning, and they were too young to understand what had happened, and why their mothers changed so suddenly and told them to sing. One little girl who was glancing furtively about as the company was marching down the hill from the station, was asked if she knew the song the boys were singing, and she answered cautiously: "Yes, but we should be careful, **THEY MAY HEAR US.**"

Those children have been irreparably injured. They have suffered the war blight. Their bodies have been permanently modified by malnutrition, and their minds and characters permanently modified by the conditions under which they have lived. The psychological effects of this war are far reaching. This is a fascinating field for speculation. Think of the new, blank mind of a little child registering grief, fear, horror and almost nothing else for its first four conscious years!

Thousands of those little ones had never learned to

play. They had never had enough to eat. Horror had been their common experience, hunger their habitual state, and fear their constant companion. They did not remember anything else. The weak had starved and died. Only those of greatest vitality had survived.

They did not grieve for the joys they had never known, but they dreaded a repetition of the sorrows they had experienced. Their greatest fear was separation from their mothers or other relatives left to them. This was the supreme tragedy they all understood so well. Their fathers had been taken away; their big brothers had been taken away; their sisters had been taken away; some of their mothers had been taken away into the vast unknown, and this was the most terrible fate that the mind of a little child could apprehend.

This fear of separation amounted to a war obsession. The older children were somewhat the same in this respect. The members of those broken families dreaded nothing so much as losing each other. They were willing to endure privation if they could endure it together. This made it very difficult to segregate those with contagious diseases. They put no faith in the promises of men. All men were liars. They could not be trusted, and no prudent child would let his mother out of his sight.

I shall never forget a boy of about twelve years of age with a bad case of lupus, who came in with his grandmother. This dreadful disease covered his hands and part of his face. He was a hideous sight and a danger to those with whom he was traveling.

It was impossible to take that boy to the hospital without taking his grandmother. They clung together desperately, and the child cried out in anguish that they had taken all the rest of the family, but even the Boche had left him his grandmother.

The incoming convoys were always met at Evian by the American Red Cross Ambulances, and by the nurses and members of the different French societies organized to aid and comfort the *rapatriés*. Every effort was made to make them feel that their homecoming was an event, and that they were more than welcome. We all tried to register joy and gladness. The attempt was a pitiful failure. Who could look happy in the presence of such abysmal grief? The only genuine note of joy was the heart-breaking joy of deliverance expressed in one way or another by the people themselves. They had reached the bottom of the bottomless pit, and the only direction in which they could look was upward.

The very old people were always exhausted by the long trip, and many of the young children developed a special disorder during the journey due to sitting for so many hours with their legs hanging over the edge of a hard seat. Their legs were congested, swollen and very painful from the knees down, but no permanent injury resulted. All these cases and others unable to walk were taken in the ambulances, while the rest of the *rapatriés* followed the band on foot from the station to the Casino.

The patience with which those people accepted their afflictions was a lesson in fortitude to some of us unreconciled to relatively small misfortunes. With

weary, ill-shod feet they marched along, keeping time to the national airs they had not heard since the invasion. It was such a joy to hear a national air! With every reason to weep they sang. It was a privilege to be able to lift up their voices and sing the songs that were in their souls. Some of them tried to dance, but there was no delight in the spectacle. The incongruity somehow suggested the gruesome dance of the hobgoblins.

The Casino was used as a clearing house for these unfortunates, where the business of receiving, registering, and assigning them to the different departments of France was done in a gracious, ceremonial way. The first need to be met was the need for food. Every morning and evening tables were set for five or six hundred in the large reception hall, and the incoming *rapatriés* took their first meal in their own free country.

The room was decorated with the flags of the allied nations and there were so many of them that no one but an expert on ensigns could have told to which countries they belonged. This was confusing. The people had known nothing of the war except that Germany was winning. Was it possible that there were so many nations on the face of the earth, and that they were all fighting for France? This news was better than the dinner. Those liars and assassins would soon be exterminated.

Patriotic music was played during this meal in the evening, after which the Prefet delivered an address of welcome. Before the war people were not admitted to the Casino reception hall unless they were in

evening dress. The Prefet had the habit. He always came in formal dress, and he looked old fashioned and out of the game. His intentions were kindly, but it seemed a pity to remind those poor people of what they had suffered at a moment when forgetfulness had come to their relief. He spoke of their sons who had died for France; of their fathers and husbands who had been killed, maimed or taken prisoners of war; of their young boys enslaved, and their girls held by the enemy—and the people bowed their heads and wept.

Most of the old men and women, the mothers and children, who sat at those tables and listened to the Prefet's speech of welcome, had lost every earthly possession human creatures hold dear. They had lost their homes, their fathers, husbands, sons and daughters. They had been stripped of everything except the scant covering on their bodies. But as the Prefet spoke of the glorious traditions of their country, and the national promises for the future, their sad faces gradually lighted up and indicated that no sacrifice was considered too great to make for France.

There was never a dissenting expression on any of their faces, and considering their wretchedness and physical weakness their response to the *Marseillaise*, which immediately followed, was astonishing. With the very first strain they arose and commenced to sing. To the old men the song seemed sacred. It was a hymn, and they sang it with their hats in their hands and a look of reverence on their faces. To the older boys, all under fourteen years, it was the glorious war song of France. It stirred the fighting soul

of youth within them, and they waved their caps and sang with a spirit that showed quite clearly that they already felt the call of their country and were waiting impatiently until they were old enough to answer.

But what did the *Marseillaise* mean to the mothers whose sons had died in honor, and whose daughters were living in—in the hands of the enemy? What did it mean to the women who had watched their little ones fade and die of privation? Was it not a song of sacrifice? Whatever it meant to them they were not silent. With a fortitude of soul that made them seem like blessed martyrs, they lifted up their voices and sang the *Marseillaise*, and their song was a sob that would wring the soul of the world.

When those women spoke of their sons who had died for France, they raised their sad faces and smiled. There was a compensating glory in the sacrifice that made it possible to bear. But when they spoke of their daughters who were living somewhere in the hands of the enemy, their heads were low and their voices were the voices of women whose souls had sounded the deeps beyond despair.

We have commemorated the death of Edith Cavell. She was an embodied spirit sent to help save the world. Hers was a glorious fate. She was shot in the open like a soldier, and her soul went home to England and raised an avenging army of a million men within a few weeks. What woman would not choose to die like Edith Cavell?

The supreme martyrs of this cruel war are not the honored dead, but the living who have suffered and are still suffering more than death. If any American

woman whose son of twenty-five has died on the battle-field, thinks she has drained the cup of war, let her imagine that same dear boy at five years old, standing at her knee and begging for food with the faith of a child in his mother's power to grant his prayer. Let her visualize him growing paler and weaker as the days go by, and finally dying of privation. This is what warfare means to women. There are millions of such women and children in Europe to-day—and the war is not over for them.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE CONVERTED CASINO

IN regular order the *rapatriés* left the dining-room and passed to the Information Bureau adjoining. Eight hundred thousand records had been compiled from information secured from friends and relatives of people who were living in the occupied provinces at the time of the invasion, and were kept on file, together with letters, messages and sometimes money, in case the person in question should pass through Evian. About eighty per cent. of the wayfarers had found friends through this bureau.

The recording system was very effective. It was devised and put into operation by Mademoiselle Philomene Goossens, a young woman who had never done any work of this kind before, and is merely another instance of the adaptability of women to new occupations, which proved of such value in the warring countries.

Mademoiselle Goossens reached at random into a file of letters addressed to possible *rapatriés* and drew out one containing twenty francs, and another offering a home to a friend of better days. There was a supernatural suggestion in the coincidence that about sixty per cent. of the letters delivered through the bureau were written by friends in France during



the three days that the recipients were making the journey from Belgium to Evian. We were told that the writers of the letters were not notified, and had no means of knowing that their friends were en route for this point. Everybody in the bureau wondered at this strange phenomenon, which surely indicated that there are things in heaven and earth not understood by men.

The bureau was simply an extensive double counter arranged on temporary trestles in the center of the room. A hundred and fifty young women were employed there. The sections were lettered from A to Z, like a post office, and this made it possible for the people to find their places promptly, where their records were taken and any letters or messages were delivered. They were all eager for personal news and a letter or the lack of it made a great difference to their homecoming.

Before the war some of the *rapatriés* had been rich and others had been poor; some proud, and others humble. The acid test of war had been impartially applied to them. From a military standpoint they all belonged to one class—the worthless. They all belonged on the wastage dump, and that is where they found themselves.

Northern France and Belgium had been rich and thrifty countries, and many of those people had been accustomed to all the comforts of life, but when they reached Evian none of them had available means, that is, money with an actual purchasing value, although some of them carried thousands of francs in the war currency of the districts in which they had lived.

This currency was issued to cover the money that had been removed from these places, at the time of evacuation. During the years of occupation it had been used as a local medium of exchange. It was certified at Evian when the holders passed through, and the nation assumed the responsibility of redeeming it gradually.

At the Bureau of Certification where a large number of people were usually waiting I noticed one woman who presented four thousand francs. The money gave her but little advantage over those without means. One hundred and sixty francs (one hundred for herself and thirty each for her children), about twenty-nine dollars, was redeemed at once. This was the maximum allowance for a woman with two children. Her currency was certified and under the national arrangement she would be permitted to cash one hundred and sixty francs monthly in any part of France. The next woman waiting in line had not so much as a franc to call her own. She also was made an allowance for herself and children, which was supplemented by other means available at Evian.

To the casual observer the great and distinguishing difference between the *rapatriés* was the difference between those who voluntarily sought out the public baths at the Casino, and those who said they did not need a bath. These baths had been installed at the instance and insistence of a woman who had lived in the war zone, and knew what it meant to live without bathing.

Warfare makes people acquainted with strange bed-

fellows, and where large numbers were herded and billeted together vermin increased and multiplied, and swarmed alike on the clean and the unclean—and some people could never get used to them. Cooties of all kinds dug in and became so firmly established that it was impossible to remove them by hand. A high degree of heat, strong parasitocides, and special machinery was necessary for their extermination.

All of these conveniences had been installed at the Casino baths. The fame of this institution had spread beyond the border, and while some of the *rapatriés* preferred to bear the ills they had, rather than risk the effect of a bath in the middle of the winter in a strange place, the more adventurous made a straight break for the bath-house, in order to get the first chance at the towel. This rush was unnecessary. There were plenty of towels and soap and hot water. Those poor people could scarcely believe that such luxury was meant for them. And wonder of wonders, while they were scrubbing and being scrubbed, their one and only suit of clothes was put into a mammoth steam sterilizer under high pressure, and came out dry, warm, and without a living thing in the seams.

Boys are not partial to bathtubs, but those urchins had great sport at that place where ten or fifteen of them pranced together like so many water imps, under the big fountains. All white boys look alike with their clothes off, and as they glanced mischievously backward over their bare shoulders, they seemed so much like home youngsters out for a frolic, that we half expected to see them dive from the platform into the "swimmin' hole" on the opposite side, and the

only reason they did not do so was because the "swimmin' hole" had been left out of the scheme.

From the Bureau of Information the procession passed to the *Salle de Baccara*—at least that is what was written over the entrance in letters of gold. The ceiling and dome of this hall were decorated with spades, clubs, hearts and diamonds. But instead of the baccarat players of former days, a long line of little children were passing in single file before the medical inspectors of the American Red Cross.

In another part of this hall the grown people were interrogated by the French military police, and those who were regarded with suspicion were detained for further examination. Some of the spies sent through with the convoys had been detected in this way.

War and Pestilence are boon companions, and those children had all kinds of diseases from scabies (the seven-year itch of the good old days when men fought with sword and shield and were limited in their capacity for damage) to lupus on the surface of their bodies, and everything from ascarides (intestinal worms) to tuberculosis on the interior.

The monotonous repetition of contagious skin diseases was varied occasionally by the detection of an insidious case of diphtheria, measles or scarlet fever. Sometimes a fine, healthy child, clean and well nourished, would come along the line, and we knew instantly that his poor mother had found some way of circumventing the system. On one occasion a lank youth of about nineteen appeared, and when the inspector asked what was the matter with him, he laughed and said that he had deceived the German

medical authorities by simulating tuberculosis. He was in good health and enlisted immediately in the French army.

The children with parasitic skin disorders, including bad cases of pediculosis (lice), were sent to the Gordon Annex, a delousing hospital with accommodation for about two hundred cases. Those infected with scarlet fever, diphtheria, and other contagions which were likely to become epidemic, were isolated at the American Red Cross Hospital for Contagious Diseases, and non-contagious cases of a minor nature were treated at the dispensary.

The French physician in charge of the medical service at Evian assigned the children's work to the specialists provided by the American Red Cross. Several hundred examinations were made daily. A great many cases of scarlet fever, diphtheria, measles, and whooping cough were detected—and each case was a potential epidemic nipped in the bud.

These children were detained at the hospital, which was formerly the Hotel Chatelet, one of the finest hotels in this town of fine hotels. Its broad sun porches built for poor little rich girls and boys and all their relations served very well for poor little poor children recovering from contagious diseases. And the spacious gardens with hide-and-seek shrubs, climbable trees, and lovely primrose paths winding toward the shore of Lake Geneva, were delightful playgrounds for convalescent children who had almost forgotten how to play.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE INTERNATIONAL BURYING GROUND

My next move was a move from grief to glory—from Evian les Bains to an American camp in the War Zone. I had seen the dire results of war in and about Paris, but at Evian there was an endless procession, a continuous exposition of the first fruits of the World's War—the soul-sickening effects of the holocaust upon non-combatants, especially women and children. After that visit the Allied soldiers looked different to me, and our boys were more than soldiers—they were American Crusaders come to save the world, and above the head of their columns it was easy to imagine an angel with a flaming sword.

“I have read a fiery Gospel writ in burnished rows of steel,” and there is a terrible inspiration in it. After Evian I could never look at our marching troops without a sense of religious exaltation, and a feeling that our nation had been ordained by God to be the determining factor in the final war of the world.

It seemed so clear. In the mysterious scheme of things a continent had been reserved as a refuge for the men who would be free from every part of Europe. There they had built a nation with a soul of liberty, and with the blood of every European country flowing in its veins. Such a nation would naturally fight for

the freedom of the world and then endeavor to establish permanent peace between its mother countries. Victory was inevitable, and triumphant democracy fighting against itself afterward was unthinkable.

We American women in France felt so proud of our soldiers. They were so clean and young and strong. The pity of it all was that even one should be called to die in his youth as a sacrifice to the selfishness and folly of men.

The boys who made such a glorious record during the war were a high credit to American women, for their care and training had been largely in the hands of women. It was part of the Prussian system to take their boys from their women teachers at an early age, lest they become effeminate, but there had never been anything about our boys that had suggested the need of methodically developing masculinity. As a nation we have not been interested in building a war machine, but results have demonstrated that we have done fairly well in making men. Our military experts have not been fussing over-much about the birth-rate and endeavoring to increase it willy-nilly, although we all recognize that motherhood is the fundamental military service. We have heard a great deal about unpreparedness in our different departments of war, but there was one branch of the service that was prepared. When the war call came the mothers of America were ready with millions of the finest sons that ever made up an army.

This war has disproved many pet theories, and it has proved to the military observers of all the world that women-taught men can fight. Our boys have not

been beaten and brutalized. They have not been taught to look up and salute and look down and boot. They have not been systematically militarized, but they certainly can fight, and when they occupy conquered territory the women and little children will have nothing to fear.

The soldiers of the world have never had a better interpreter than Kipling, and after studying our troops he said that the American soldiers were peculiar in that their sense of delicacy had been outraged by the incidents of the war. *This is the greatest compliment that has ever been paid an army.* Soldiers engaged in the bloody business of war are not supposed to have a sense of delicacy. And one of the things we have learned is that a man with a chivalric soul and an outraged sense of delicacy is a dangerous man to meet. A converted "conscientious objector" from Tennessee made the greatest personal record of the war. This is not surprising. Men with high ideals have always been the best fighters in a just cause. The nearer men get to the angels the better they fight the devil.

The part of France known as the War Zone and north and south of it, for that matter, has never been anything but a war zone. From the beginning of recorded history it has been the marching, camping and fighting ground for the hostile hosts of Europe. At Chalons, within a stone's throw of the above mentioned American camp, and not far from Château-Thierry, Attila, the Hun, with a million followers, met his "Waterloo" after having ravaged Europe and exacted tribute from Rome. Here Clovis, the Frank, defeated



the remnant of the Roman forces at Soissons, and the armies of Charlemagne afterward made peace with the sword.

William the Conqueror crossed from the War Zone to England and was absorbed by the natives as a harmful, extraneous germ is absorbed by protecting phagocytes, and his English descendant, the Black Prince, returned a few generations later and practically cleaned up the country. Warfare at that time had an appealing personal touch, and in the distribution of loot that followed one of his victorious battles, the Black Prince plucked the three plumes from the helmet of the King of Bohemia, motto (*Ich dien*) and all, and stuck them in his own crown, and from that day to this these feathers have constituted the armorial bearings of the Prince of Wales.

The mission of Joan of Arc culminated in the crowning of Charles VII at the Rheims Cathedral. She was a saint to the French and a witch to the English and so they burned her at the stake in this zone of their military activities. Napoleon's legions marched triumphantly through the War Zone to Berlin, and subsequently to defeat at Waterloo. After Sedan the Prussians goose-stepped through this territory to Paris, but their second visit forty-four years later was cut short by the Battle of the Marne. Following this a trench was dug through the War Zone which divided the world, and here the defenders of democracy met and defeated the final forces of autocracy.

The nations of Europe have not been at war all the time. There have been intervals of peace necessary for the national neighborhoods to prepare for war.

During the ages of slow communication, considerable time was required to make treaties, celebrate royal marriages between selected males and females of the ruling houses in order to cement these treaties, readjust national boundaries, reconstruct ravaged territory and reproduce soldiers, after which hostilities were invariably resumed.

There was never any delay on account of a technical cause for a declaration of war. The different countries kept lists of unrequited wrongs on hand. The crying need was always for soldiers and as soon as there was a new crop of young boys ready for slaughter, they were sent to the War Zone and killed. This has always been a burying-ground for the boyhood of Europe, and now that we have added our quota surely the cup of fury has been drained to the dregs.

Close your eyes and mentally visualize the millions and millions of soldiers of all the centuries marching and countermarching, wearing different uniforms and bearing different banners. Generation after generation the mettle of new men and new armies have been tempered in this fiery furnace, and the Expeditionary forces of the United States have been the last to take this test triumphantly.

Tomes and tomes have been written about the battles fought upon this small section of the earth. From Pepin the Short to Pershing the Tall, the fighting men of the ages have been going to it hammer and tongs, fire and sword, burning pitch and boiling tar, on this terrain. Here Charles the Fat, Francis the Fair, and Louis the Grande himself have had their innings. Here the standards of the nations have been unfurled

to the breeze, and the lions, unicorns, single and double-headed eagles, and all the birds, animals and reptiles embellishing the banners, crests and shields of misguided men and nations have laid down peacefully together.

A camouflage of holiness has always been created for these unholy sacrifices. The legions of Charlemagne marched under the Blue Hood of Saint Martin; the hosts of England at a later date under the Red Cross of Saint George; the forces of France under the Oriflamme of Saint Denis, and the armies of Germany under the Black Cross adopted by that nation. It has been a saintly business. Generation after generation the hosts of mankind have shed their blood and buried their dead (when time permitted) in this aceldama. No wonder the poppies are red. It is good poppy soil. For ages and ages of time untold it has been enriched by the blood and bodies of boys.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### FIVE WOMEN IN A CAMIONETTE

A CHAIN of dispensaries with a hospital at Toul and a center at the lovely city of Nancy in the Meurthe-et-Moselle was operated by the American Red Cross, and by visiting these places with the women engaged in the work I got a fair idea of the country and what was going on at that time.

The scene painters and stage carpenters had been busy in the war zone along the Lorraine front. The roads were screened with filmy draperies that waved in thin air like floating, unsubstantial clouds concealing military movements from the falcon of the enemy. French and American troops were constantly moving, and trains of camouflaged cannon and camion crept along the highways like mammoth chameleons. The whole country was bristling with arms, but viewed from above it must have been literally a picture of rustic innocence.

Rumors to the effect that the enemy was preparing for a decisive drive were bruited through the country, and preparations were certainly being made to resist it. There were disquieting signs and portents. The United States was an unknown quantity and quality on the other side of the submarine. Russia had gone to pieces. Italy had suffered a crushing defeat.

What next? No one admitted a doubt, but many a thoughtful eye was looking westward across the ocean, and instead of peace on earth the awful idea of a continuous war between continents was forming in the minds of men.

But in the Christmas month at the darkest hour the Star of the Allies rose in the East. Jerusalem was taken by the British forces. This was no great military advantage. But if ever there was a divine sign given to men to uphold their faith at a time of need, the giving of the Holy City into the keeping of the Allies was a sign from God Himself that the war cry, "Gott mit Uns," was a sacrilegious assumption on the part of the enemy.

I shall never forget the morning when this news came into Nancy. Our camionette was standing in front of the headquarters of the American Fund for French Wounded. It was the only sign of life in the Place Stanislas, that magnificent square that teemed with life before the war, and looked like a tombless cemetery afterward.

A German plane had been brought down a few days before and was lying beside the central monument. It was a sorry wreck—the deadest thing in that dead square. It looked like a great bird that had just been killed. Its body was crushed, its wings broken, and a tangle of fine wires connected its different parts as though the sensitive fibers from its spinal cord, torn from their sheaths still held to the lacerated surface tissues.

As a subject for speculation it presented intensely interesting possibilities. Who was this enemy avi-

ator whose romantic career in the clouds had been so suddenly cut off? What was his record? Who had brought him down? Which one of our boys was wearing the life of this Lucifer, as a star, in his military crown? All these questions and many others might have been suggested by that tragic scrap heap—but not one of them entered my head.

The German war cross painted on the green wing of that mechanical corpse fascinated me. It looked like the Cross of the Hospitalers, the Cross of Mercy, emblazoned on that merciless bombing plane, and I was wondering at this strange violation of the fitness of things, and what sort of a national mind lay behind these incongruous manifestations, when the girls came out to the camionette and called me. The mail had arrived. The English daily newspaper printed in Paris was opened, and there on the front page was the thrilling headline: "JERUSALEM HAS FALLEN."

The man who wrote that headline would have been capable of painting the Cross of Mercy on a bombing plane. A glance down the column showed us that Jerusalem had risen. After a thousand years' occupation by the Turks, the Holy City had been given to the Allies. The prayer of the Christian ages had been answered. The goal of the Crusaders had been won. And it was easy to imagine the shades of Godfrey of Bouillon, Richard Cœur de Lion, and all that knightly crew standing at attention when General Allenby reverently accepted the keys of the city and entered at the Jaffa Gate.

This victory was celebrated in our camionette that morning. Our morale reached one hundred per cent.

at the first reading and kept mounting upward as we skidded along toward Pont-a-Mousson, where the Red Cross operated a dispensary within a stone's throw of the trenches.

There were five of us—five women in a camionette, and we certainly had the "Three Men in a Boat," who made such good reading a few years ago, beaten at every point except the telling of the story.

Our conveyance was camouflaged in the green, russet and gray shades of the autumn landscape. This was very effective for the fall of the year, but we should have changed colors gradually with the seasons like the animals who depend upon this subterfuge of nature for survival. White lead and imitation icicles was the proper coat for December, but paint was scarce. A passing airman would have spotted us instantly and smiled at the spectacle of a moving object that looked like a stray section of a bosky dell gliding swiftly over the white expanse of country.

But we were not worrying about airmen; we were rejoicing in the good news, and breaking spontaneously into the *Holy City* every few minutes. We could not remember all the words of the anthem, but those we were able to recall must have been inspired for the day of deliverance:

"Jerusalem! Jerusalem! Sing for the night is o'er,  
Hosanna in the Highest! Hosanna for ever more."

The machine was skidding frightfully and several times we caught our breath and stopped in the middle of a verse to thank our little chauffeuress for a narrow escape from death. Her driving was not such as to

inspire confidence, but women ambulance drivers were still on trial in the war zone, and we felt in duty bound to give her all the encouragement we could without compromising our consciences or losing our lives.

She was a brave little girl and as pretty as a picture. In fact she was a picture in her blue uniform with its scarlet lined cape thrown back over her shoulder in a way to leave her wheel arm free. Her ruling passion was to make good as an ambulance driver in the war zone, and barring accident there was no reason why she should not win a decoration for conspicuous service if opportunity came her way.

There were times when we secretly wished that her arm was as strong as her spirit, but she possessed the compensating advantage of being able to extract "essence" from a French military garage that had long since been reported dry to civilians. She never whimpered about the weather, and so long as she was sitting on the front seat braving the storm, the least we could do was to give her a fair word and trust to luck.

Passing through Pompey, one of the border towns, we noticed a crowd of women, children and old men, following after a very active, strong-lunged cripple, who was yelling some sort of information at the top of his voice. His message was evidently causing excitement. Our first thought was bombs and shells, and we involuntarily glanced around for an abri, but a moment later we learned that he was our advance agent, the town crier, officially informing the people that the American Red Cross was to open a dispensary in that town on the following day.

On the following day we were there, and so was the



mayor, and the head school teacher, and all the inhabitants of the town who were free to come. It was a regular christening. These affairs are conducted in France like weddings and funerals with all the pomp and circumstance suiting the occasion.

The people who came to the regular clinics were not all sick. Some called because they were sociable, and when they were asked what was the matter they answered naïvely: "We are not sick, madame, but we want to see you."

They were interested in Americans, and life was so deadly dull in some of the towns near the front that even a medical clinic was a welcome diversion. There were no other amusements. The picture shows had been closed for almost four years. The war news was meager. Existence had been reduced to just one enemy air-man after another, and during these nocturnal visits the people groped to their cellars and tried to talk about something human in order to keep sane in a maniacal environment.

The inhuman order of life was more than normal creatures had been created to endure. The monotony and tragic routine was maddening. It is easy to think of men engaged in battle. This is history repeating itself. Adult males of different species have a fighting instinct. But it is hard to visualize little children whose ears have been trained by terrible experience for the sounds of war, detecting the hum of the enemy motor and disappearing into the nearest abri like so many little chickens when the hawk is on the wing.

Among the houses that had recently been destroyed there was one where a mother and two children had

been killed. The father of these children had been serving in Salonica for two years. He had been granted "permission" and returned home all unknowing to surprise his family, arriving just in time to attend the funeral.

Pont-a-Mousson had been bombed and bombed until it looked like old Pompeii. There was one house with the walls standing and an outside stairs that I climbed and looked in from the second floor. A bomb had been dropped through the roof and had exploded in the basement, tearing the heart out of this house. The kitchen utensils had been blown up from the lower floor and scattered about the sleeping room. In the center of the wall at the head of the bed there was a picture of the Virgin Mary hanging between a framed marriage certificate and a photograph of a young couple in their wedding finery. The foot of the bedstead hung over the yawning crater in the floor, and on the opposite side there were two little cribs upset, that mutely testified to the issue of this marriage. The life of this household had evidently been arrested at this point.

The trenches opened from the gate of Pont-a-Mousson, and the familiar notes of the different guns and shells were instantly differentiated by the residents. They referred to them casually, as we might say, ah, that is a robin or a lark or perhaps a wood-pecker when the machine gun was peppering away. Some one remarked the note of the anti-aircraft gun and I went out to see. Sure enough, an observation plane was passing high in the clouds, and following each report a little puff of white smoke appeared in the

vicinity of the plane showing where the explosion had occurred.

There is a cemetery on the hillside across the river which cuts through the center of the town, where the Prussians buried their dead in 1871, and during the great offensive at this point at the beginning of the present war, the skeletons were literally shelled out of their graves and participated in the general mêlée.

On this occasion the Kaiser himself in a new white uniform is said to have stood on the hill beyond the German trenches, and gazed covetously upon fair Nancy while waiting for his troops to clear the way for his triumphal entry. But Nancy, the coquette, drew the line on the Kaiser. She did not flirt with his men. She did not serve them macaroons, the delicious confection which is given to all welcome visitors, because it originated in Nancy. The immortal Twentieth Corps helped her to receive them, and after the reception she washed her dainty hands.

## CHAPTER XIX

### FINIS

MERRY Christmas at the American camp was a joy that had been growing daily in anticipation. The Christmas season always brings its train of trooping ghosts that reverse the reel of Time's mighty film showing pictures of past seasons. There were Eastern Christmas times and Western ones, and Christmas up near the Arctic Circle, but this was to be the greatest Christmas of all: Christmas at the American camp in the War Zone—the first Christmas after the taking of Jerusalem.

I had "supped full with horrors" and was beginning to feel uncomfortably "fed up" and the festivities in prospect promised diversion and delight. Nothing but the landscape would be lacking to make it a home affair. The prevailing colors would be our colors, red, white, and blue arranged in stripes—the Star-Spangled Banner and all that means to an American. Thousands of merrymakers would be wearing the American uniform. There would be American boys and American girls, American songs and American dances, an American Christmas tree, and last but not least an American dinner.

France is famous for her cuisine, but France had other things to think about in those dark days, besides

my tastes had been acquired at home and the only food that seemed just right to me on the other side of the ocean was that which I found at the American camps. Great preparations were being made for the coming Christmas. This was to be an occasion to be remembered and lived over and over as long as life lasted. In order that I might participate, some of my friends had secured a request for me to return to the camp and assist with the program and I fully intended giving myself that pleasure. Knowing my ruling weakness these same friends had sent a menu on which I had feasted my home hungry eyes. There was to be turkey and cranberry sauce, sweet potatoes, green peas, mince pies, plum pudding, Oregon apples, California peaches, Texas nuts, candy made of sugar, and white bread—white bread with raisins in it, such as I had had at that camp before.

All these joys of anticipation were mine and nothing could take them from me, but when the time came I was sick with bronchitis and sciatica. Pain and distress naturally suggested the House of the Good Neighbor, and I went direct to Paris, arriving at the refuge quite unexpectedly on Christmas eve.

There was no one at home but Madam Fleuret, the cook, and she was pleased to have company and gladly shared her dinner with me. It was rabbit stew, but in war times we were thankful for small blessings, and at least the purple cabbage of execrable memory, which has always been subconsciously associated with rabbit stew since my sojourn in a central European city several years ago, did not offend my eye on this occasion.

The cook's generosity was its own reward. She gave me her rabbit and still had it, while I sat thinking of the American camp and all the glories I had missed. Heaven in France was with the American troops, and what had I done that I should be shut out on Christmas? Why should I be afflicted with bronchitis and sciatica, and be obliged to limp back to the House of the Good Neighbor?

Madam Fleuret was solicitous. It was a draft—a current of air that had done the damage. Traveling on trains was so dangerous. There were always malignant currents of air rushing through the open corridors. People were so careless. They often lifted the windows or opened the doors in direct violation of the law prohibiting these indiscretions. They should be punished. Why should an innocent person suffer bronchitis or sciatica because of the criminal carelessness of a fellow traveler?

In rebuttal of my feeble defense of atmospheric currents, she admitted that in America the elements might be benign, and currents of air salubrious, but in France the wind from the northeast was likely to be fatal. How could it be otherwise? It came from Germany. It was "*geschlecht*." Even the language was harsh and terrible.

Madam Fleuret spoke German fairly well. She had lived in occupied territory for over three years with enemy soldiers billeted upon her house most of the time, and she had learned their language in order to understand and circumvent them as much as she possibly could. My knowledge of French was practically nil, and she usually spoke German to me in a

low tone so that no one in the house might suspect us of conspiracy.

She hated the Germans collectively, comprehensively—not so much on account of her personal suffering, but because of the evil they had afflicted upon her loved ones. She hated them in the name of her beloved son who had been killed in the Battle of the Marne. She hated them in the name of her dear husband who had perished while a prisoner of war. She hated them in the name of her poor little boy who had died from hunger and exposure in an open court where they had been locked for five days and nights without food or warmth during the final evacuation of their native town. But all the enmity she bore them in the name of the dead was love compared with the mother-hatred she held against them in the name of the living daughter they had taken into captivity.

There was something elementary and titanic in that woman's capacity for hatred. As I watched her she became the living embodiment of the protest of womankind of all the ages against war and its hideous train of lust and cruelty. She had borne all its terrors of suffering and outrage and death, silently for the most part, as if all her strength of soul and body were consumed in mere endurance. Tears and sobs and curses were for lighter woe than hers. Before the majesty of her grief futile words of consolation died unspoken. Her dark eyes repeated the wail of the prophet: "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow?"

The room was lighted by a solitary candle supple-

mented by a reluctant fire in the grate and the feeble flames made wavering, fantastic shadows on the wall. My storm coat was hanging on the hat-rack in the corner. It was surmounted by a German helmet showing a bullet-hole, which the American boy who gave me the helmet said was made by an American bullet. In the flickering half light this helmet above the storm coat strongly suggested a German sentry standing guard over us. Madam Fleuret remarked this, and taking down the helmet she examined it curiously, observing with satisfaction that the bullet hole indicated that the dead "Boche" was going toward Berlin when Death overtook him.

With a terrible, passionless murmur of words which suggested the imprecatory psalms, she gathered up the remains of this strange Christmas dinner and carried away the tray, leaving me alone with that German ghost in the corner regarding me from the shadows as if he were trying to enter his personal protest against her indictment.

As the fire burned lower his features seemed dimly outlined. He did not look like a Hun. There was nothing about him to suggest Bismarck or Von Hindenburg. I had seen so many boys in the War Zone that boys were on my mind and heart. Perhaps that is why he looked so young, so like an innocent boy protesting against a cruel fate that had marked him for this sacrifice. He was dead—cut off in his youth when he had just tasted life and found it sweet, and somewhere beyond the Rhine, this Noel night was bleak and blank to his mother. No, he was not a Hun. He was just a boy, an average type of the un-



counted millions of the boys of different nations that had died in that same zone during the succeeding ages of war.

That fireplace always drew one way or the other. When it drew in the right direction all the heat went up the chimney, and when the process was reversed most of the smoke came down. That night it was alternating. The elements were contending and making strange music in the flue. From such a flute Wagner might have caught some of his weird strains. Gusts of smoke filled the room, but it was the only fire in the house, and Madam Fleuret came in and crouched on the hearth, holding her cold, hard hands over the fitful flame. Knowing her history and sensing her pain I tried to speak in the spirit of the season, but she was preoccupied, and her abstraction rebuked my unintentional impertinence. Finally she looked up and said quite simply:

"To-morrow is Christmas, and I should be happy if I knew that my little girl was with her father and her brothers. She is seventeen now—if she is living. She was very beautiful. She had brown eyes like her father's."

In the different parts of France, and up and down the ages, I had been seeing war and the fruits of war. I had read it in histories. I had seen it in pictures. At Evian I had watched the stream of human war wastage that the military authorities in the occupied provinces were pouring into southern France. I had heard the low, despairing voices of the mothers whose sons were dead and whose daughters were detained by the enemy. I had seen thousands of these non-combatant

victims, and knew how the last unit of energy that could be utilized to increase a military force had been exacted from those too old or too feeble to fight. But most terrible of all I had come to understand that this wicked war was a war on children. They were not taken, these little ones, and shot against the wall. Nothing so humane was done for them. They were slowly starved to death before the eyes of their heart-broken mothers.

In the War Zone I had seen boys—our boys, on parade in all their strength and beauty of youth, before participation in hostilities, and afterward in the hospitals. In the Lorraine District I had seen the graves of those who were first to die fighting under the Stars and Stripes. I had heard the roar of battle in the distance, the rattle of machine guns, the hum of the bombing plane, and the shriek of the whistle in the war town warning people to seek safety in the nearest abri. In the munition factories along the second line of defense I had seen the woman-power of France carrying a burden of labor that seemed beyond the strength of woman.

Naturally I thought I knew, so far as it was possible to know abstractly, what war meant, especially what it meant to women. And sitting before that wretched fire in the House of the Good Neighbor on Christmas eve, I suddenly realized that War crouched before me epitomized in the bent figure and broken heart of that one woman robbed of everything that made life worth living and carried so far beyond despair that her Christmas hope was the unnatural hope that her little girl was dead. The picture was painful and I raised

my head to look away, and there in the corner stood War—not the martial figure of Mars as it is usually depicted, but a fair young boy cut off in his youth when life was very sweet.

And this is war. Death to manhood, and worse than death to womanhood. But in the presence of war on the anniversary of that blessed eve when the Man of Peace was born to Woman, there was an exaltation in the belief that our war was a war for Peace, and that we had received a divine sign to uphold our Faith. Even while the enemy was celebrating his victories, the Star of the Allies had risen in the East, the Holy City had been given us as a token that the Lord of hosts was with us, that right should prevail and that Peace should be established upon the Earth.

THE END

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